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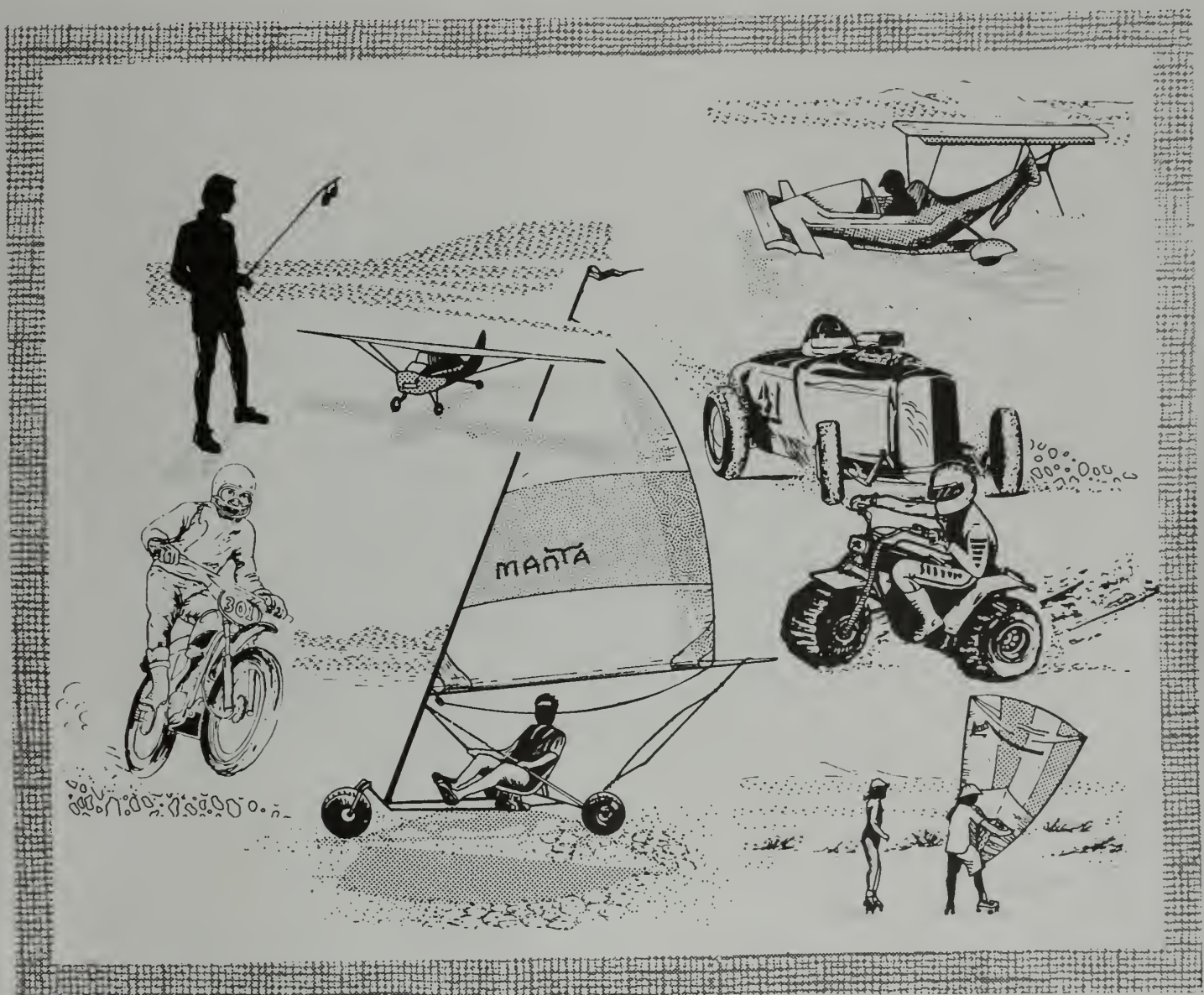
MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR
EL MIRAGE
Cooperative Management Area



Barstow Resource Area
California Desert District
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior

August 1990

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PUBLIC LANDS USA - USE, SHARE, APPRECIATE

BLM Mission Statement

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the balanced management of Public Lands and resources and their various values so that they are considered in a combination that will best serve the needs of the American people. Management is based upon the principles of multiple use and sustained yield; a combination of uses that takes into account the long term needs of future generations for renewable and non-renewable resources. These resources include recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, fish and wildlife, wilderness and natural, scenic, scientific and cultural values.

BLM-CA-PT-90-005-1610

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
150 COOLWATER LANE
BARSTOW, CALIFORNIA 92311-3221

(619) 256-3591

IN REPLY REFER TO:

8340.A(El Mirage)
(CA-068.62)

AUG 2 4 1990

Dear Reader:

Enclosed is the final Management Plan and EA for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. This plan represents the efforts of hundreds of individuals who have participated in the planning process to bring about a long-term solution to the issues concerning the public use of land on El Mirage Dry Lake and in the Shadow Mountains. I thank all of you who have been involved in the preparation of this plan.

El Mirage is widely known for the variety of recreational and commercial activities that occur in the area. Motorized use of this area by the public began in the 1930s and has grown to include a vast array of recreation vehicles, equipment, and aircraft. Additional uses of this area consist of commercial filming, product research and development mining, and grazing. Much credit for the success of this planning effort is due to you who use the area for your ability to work together in developing this plan and resolving your differences. The continued assistance of everyone will be needed in the years ahead to effectively implement the plan.

Affected landowners may expect to be contacted in the future concerning the land acquisition program. As land is acquired within the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area, recreationists and other visitors to the Management Area will begin to notice changes such as improved access roads, perimeter fencing, and restrooms. All visitors are invited to volunteer with the BLM to assist with the development and management of this regional recreation facility.

Sincerely,

Mark H. Davis
Acting Area Manager

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

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Decision Record

Management Plan
For The
El Mirage Cooperative Management Area

Proposed Action

The proposed action is approval and implementation of the Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area.

Prepared by:

Brad Mastin — 6-29-90

Outdoor Recreation Planner
Barstow Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management

Date

Reviewed by:

Sharon Pais — 6-29-90

Environmental Coordinator
Barstow Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management

Date

Recommendation

We have reviewed the Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area and Environmental Assessment, and find that this land use proposal is technically adequate and that consideration has been given to all resource values. We recommend the plan and the mitigating measures stipulated in the environmental assessment as the decision of the Bureau of Land Management on the proposed action.

Recommended by:

Mark Jones — 6-29-90

El Mirage Project Manager
Barstow Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management

Date

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DENVER, CO 80225-0047

Recommended by:

6-29-90

Chief, Resource Operations Staff
Barstow Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management

Date

6-29-90

Chief, Visitor Services Staff
Barstow Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management

Date

6/29/90

Chief Area Ranger
Barstow Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management

Date

Decision

I have reviewed the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. I find that this land use proposal reflects the concerns of the involved parties, and presents the most responsible use of the resources available. I approve the plan and mitigating measures stipulated in the Environmental Assessment as the decision of the Bureau on the proposed action.

Approved by

29 June 1990

Area Manager
Barstow Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management

Date

Rationale

The management plan reflects several years of planning effort coordinated among the residents living in the affected area, the recreational and commercial interest using the area, and the various government entities responsible for management of

the area. This plan proposes long range solutions to the issues identified and represents a win win solution for the parties involved.

A majority of the issues revolve around the recreational use of land. Recreational visitors want some land to ride off highway vehicles on. Private landowners do not want the use on their land or near their homes. This plan provides a solution for the concerns of the landowners and the visitors. Undeveloped private lands will be acquired, combined with existing federal lands, and fenced to contain use within a managed area and away from residences.

Concurrence

The following parties, as the cooperators to the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area, concur with the actions contained in the management plan.

Barbara Ann Lyerla — JUL 16 1990

Chairman, Board of Supervisors
County of San Bernardino

Date Agree. 90-820

Director
County of Los Angeles
Department of Parks and Recreation

6/28/90
Date

Chairman
California OHMVR Commission

6.28.90
Date

Deputy Director
OHMVR Division

6-29-90
Date

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SIGNED AND CERTIFIED THAT A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
EARLENE SEROAT
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
of the County of San Bernardino
By Deputy

EL MIRAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN OUTLINE

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Management Plan is to establish goals and actions to protect the public's recreational opportunities at the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area within a multiple-use context, while protecting adjacent land consistent with applicable County General Plans. The plan will confirm boundaries for the Management Area; identify the lands to acquire; and state the priorities for acquisition. It will also identify the scope and location for facilities and establish the guidelines for visitor services.

A Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area is in response to the findings of the *El Mirage/Shadow Mountains Feasibility Study*, 1985, and *A Proposal To Establish The El Mirage Special Recreation Area*, 1986. The cover letter on the feasibility report states "...as a long-term solution, that a managed area be established. The managed area would provide for multiple uses including recreation, mining, commercial filming, and sheep grazing." The proposal confirmed these findings and went on to define "...what agencies should manage the area, and from what sources funding should be sought." The recommendations from these two documents were refined in preparing the Management Plan.

Henceforth the term El Mirage Cooperative Management Area and the term Management Area will be used synonomously.

B. LOCATION AND SETTING

The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area is located in the western Mojave Desert, 25 miles northwest of Victorville, and 30 miles east of Lancaster. The area is situated in the northwestern portion of San Bernardino County, seven miles south of Edwards Air Force Base between the Los Angeles County line and Highway 395. El Mirage can be reached from the city of San Bernardino in approximately one hour by traveling north on I-15 and Highway 395. The Management Area is located approximately 100 road miles from the Los Angeles area, 60 road miles from the Riverside area, and 160 road miles from the San Diego area.

See Illustration 1 for a general location map. See Illustration 2 for the boundary of the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area and the zone of influence. The zone of influence recognizes an area from one to five miles wide surrounding the Management Area that will be indirectly impacted from the management actions within

the Management Area. When referenced in this plan, the zone of influence does not include the Management Area.

The Management Area is located in the mid-west region of the Mojave Desert. This region of the desert has an evaporation rate greater than the total amount of rainfall. Summers are usually hot and dry; the winters are usually cold and dry. Strong gusty winds blow frequently. Landscape within the Management Area consists of a dry lakebed with mountains to the north and east, between is a broad sloping bajada. The area has a consistent vegetative covering with the dominant species being Joshua trees and creosote bush. The area is populated by numerous birds and small animals typical of the high desert.

Please refer to Appendix A, *Resource Data,* for more detailed information on resources and their uses within the Management Area and the zone of influence.

C. PREVIOUS STUDIES AND PLANS

The San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department conducted a study of recreational use on El Mirage Dry Lake during the early 1970s and concluded that the majority of visitors were from surrounding counties and that funding for a managed area would be prohibitive. Subsequent inquiries to their office indicated that the County Park System would not be interested in managing a designated area at El Mirage.

During 1973, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division conducted a study of El Mirage Dry Lake. In a preliminary report titled *El Mirage Dry Lake,* the Department presented seven possible management alternatives. The report concluded it was not feasible for the State to manage the area due to low user interest, and also because "the uses carried on there are not consistent with or related to OHV (off-highway vehicle) users who are registered under this program (California Off-Highway Vehicle Green Sticker Program)."

In 1980, the BLM issued *The California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan* which established broad guidelines for managing the public lands within the California Desert District. Public land located on El Mirage dry lake was classified as "open" to OHV use. This was an acknowledgement of the value of the resources in the El Mirage area to recreationists. However, several issues such as trespass and the health and safety of visitors, were left unresolved.

The surrounding public lands in the Shadow Mountains were unclassified in the CDCA Plan, indicating an intention to dispose of these lands. The scattered land ownership pattern and the intensity of existing motorized and unmotorized recreational use

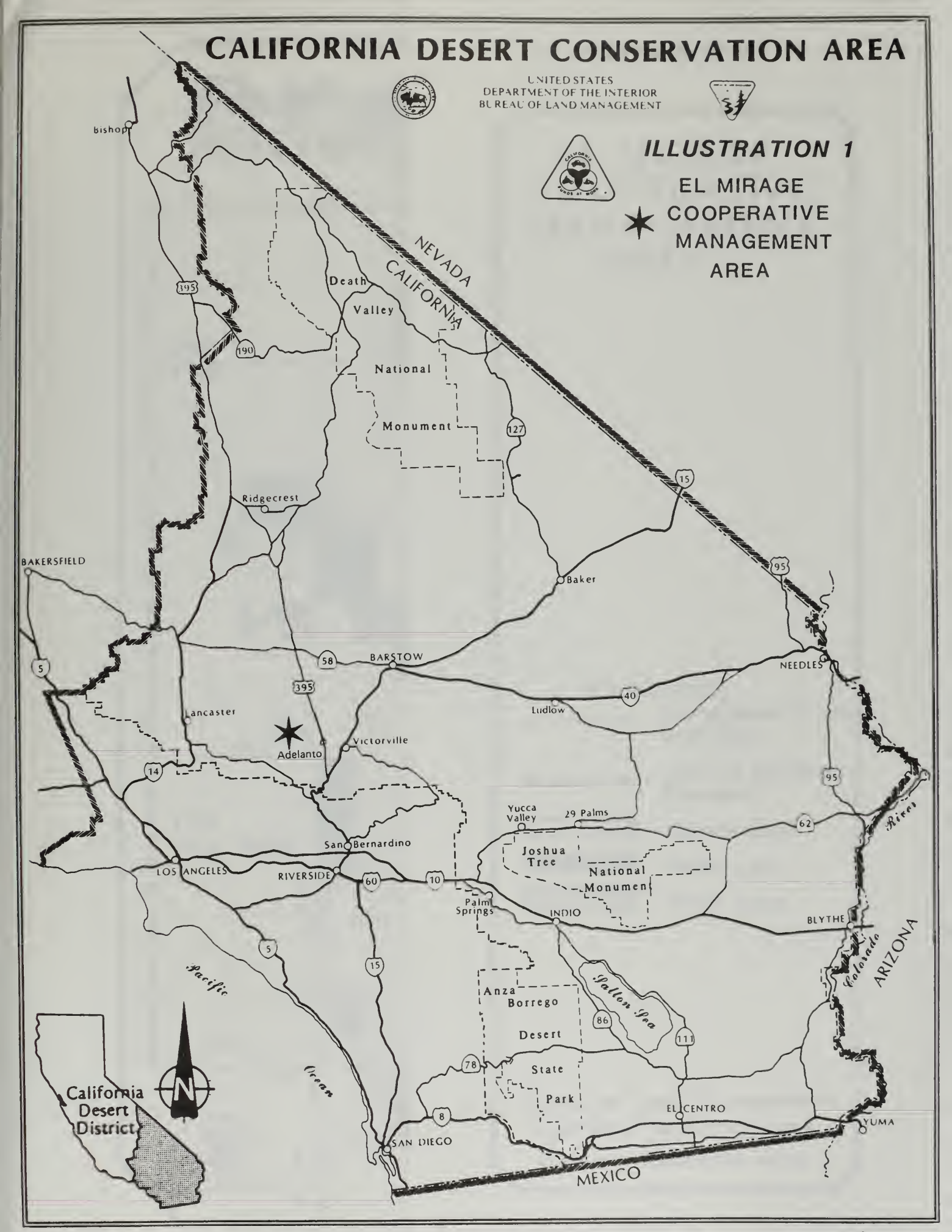
CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ILLUSTRATION 1
EL MIRAGE
COOPERATIVE
MANAGEMENT
AREA
NEVADA
CALIFORNIA
Bishop
Death
Valley
National
Monument
Ridgecrest
BAKERSFIELD
Baker
BARSTOW
NEEDLES
Lancaster
Adelanto
Victorville
Ludlow
Yucca
Valley
29 Palms
Joshua
Tree
National
Monument
San Bernardino
LOS ANGELES
RIVERSIDE
Palm
Springs
INDIO
BLYTHE
Colorado
River
ARIZONA
Pacific
Ocean
Anza
Borrego
Desert
State
Park
Salton Sea
EL CENTRO
YUMA
SAN DIEGO
MEXICO
California
Desert
District
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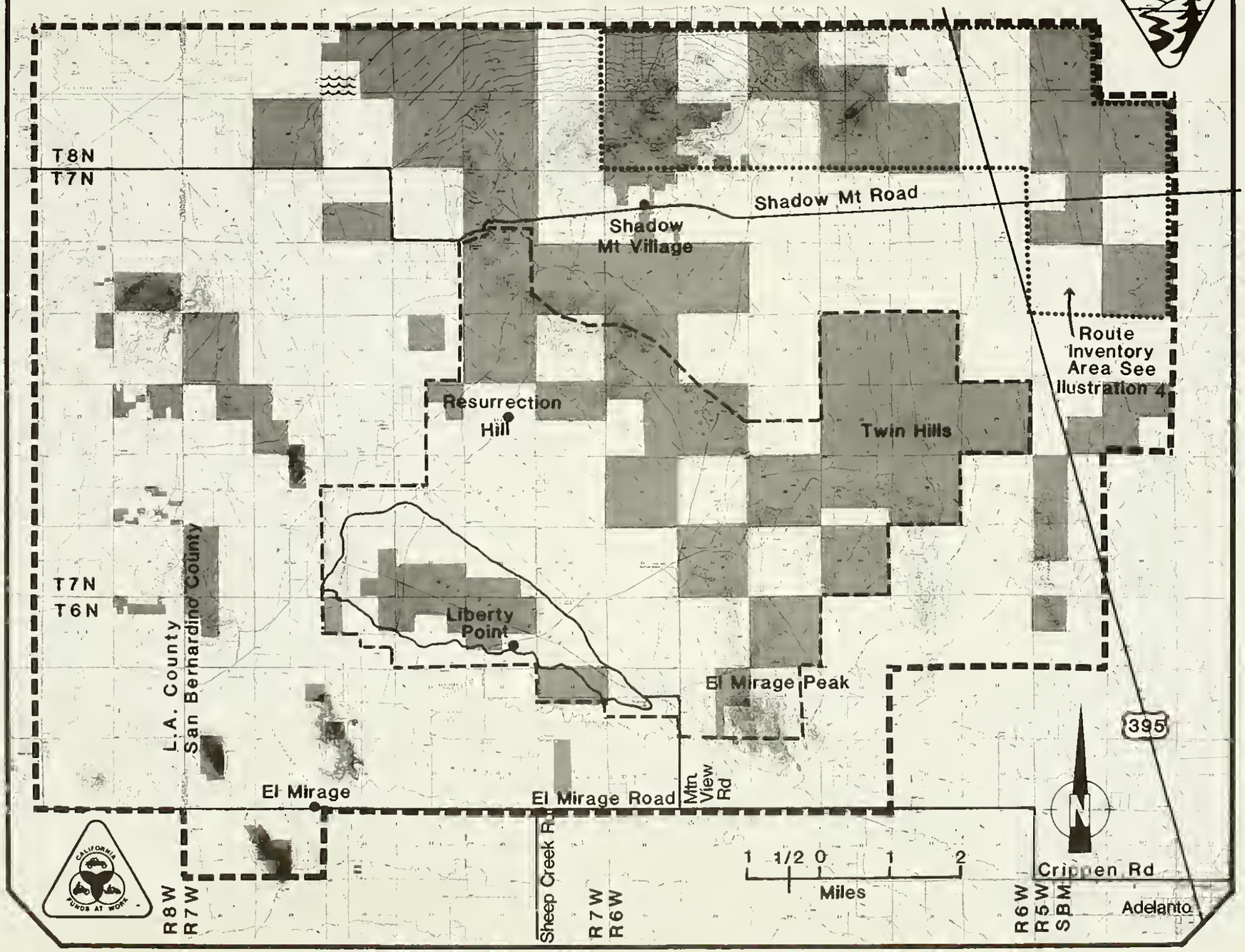
ILLUSTRATION 2

TREAD LIGHTLY!
ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND



EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

BOUNDARIES

- Management Area Boundary
- Zone of Influence Boundary
- Private Land
- Public Land
- State Land

Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District
Barstow Resource Area

made the El Mirage/Shadow Mountain area extremely difficult for the BLM to manage. In the early 1980s, BLM indicated a willingness to transfer the public lands within the El Mirage dry lake area to some other agency which might be able to provide the appropriate levels of intensive management.

In 1981, the California Department of Parks and Recreation undertook another study of the El Mirage/Shadow Mountain area. Conclusions reached in the *El Mirage-Shadow Mountains Preliminary Study* indicated that the area "...should continue to be used as a motorized vehicular recreation area". The report stressed that, if the area were to be managed as such, a buffer zone would be necessary. The report also identified a potential problem with using OHV funds for management of an area which was used by vehicles ineligible for the fund. The report concluded that "...continued recreational use of the El Mirage area will benefit people from throughout the state, as well as protect other areas of the southern desert region from the problems associated with unmanaged use."

As a result of the 1981 Preliminary Study conducted by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the BLM subsequently applied for and received a grant from the OHV Green Sticker Fund for interim management of the El Mirage/Shadow Mountain area. The grant was for $288,700 over a three year period, ending in September 1986. The intent of the grant was to provide interim management (and stability) to the area until a feasibility study could be completed and a long-term management program defined.

The *El Mirage/Shadow Mountain Feasibility Study* was prepared by a Workgroup composed of local residents and representatives from the various user groups. The Study was published in 1985 and concluded that a formally managed multi-use recreation area should be established. This study documented that over 85% of visitors to the area use vehicles that are required to be registered under the California OHV Green Sticker Program. As a response to this feasibility study, BLM prepared *A Proposal to Establish the El Mirage Special Recreation Area (1986).* This proposal presented solutions relative to resolving the two basic issues of trespass and health and safety.

In November of 1988, an Interagency Agreement was signed that officially established the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area as a joint venture among San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties, the State of California, the Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission, and the BLM.

D. THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND EL MIRAGE

In the 1930s a group of automotive racing enthusiasts selected El Mirage dry lakebed as the site to hold monthly events where they

could attempt to set world land speed records. In the ensuing years the number of participants and spectators grew as the automobile became more popular. As a result of this historic use, El Mirage became a very popular recreational site with the population of Southern California. To date, the use of El Mirage includes the original historic user group now organized as the Southern California Timing Association, plus numerous other recreational pursuits.

Recreational use statistics have been collected for the Management Area by BLM personnel for several years. Visitor counts have been compiled from aerial counts and vehicle patrols. Current estimated recreation use is 110,000 visits per year.

The most popular use occurring within the Management Area involves the use of off-highway vehicles. Other activities include the recreational use of landsailors, ultralights, para-sails, kites, sail-skates, gyrocopters, model airplanes, model rockets, hang-gliders, and sight-seeing. The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area is a place where visitors can engage in almost any recreational activity of their choice.

A spin-off from the exposure El Mirage has received as a recreation site is an increase in applications for commercial use. The most intensive commercial use the area receives is from the film industry. The area is also popular with numerous firms engaged in product testing or research and development.

Throughout the years, as overall use of the lakebed area increased, the community of El Mirage has remained a tolerant host. Residents have endured a steady stream of motorhomes and filming trucks driving down their private roads as the public has sought access to the lakebed. In times of need, the residents have provided shelter and first aid for lost and injured visitors. The communities of Shadow Mountain Village and (to some degree) Adelanto have reacted in a similar manner.

Public interest has remained intense concerning the use and management of the dry lakebed and surrounding area. A Workgroup composed of local residents, landowners, and visitors continues to serve as a sounding board for both the day-to-day and long-term operation of the Management Area.

E. MAJOR ISSUES

The Management Area is a result of the efforts by several parties to resolve issues brought to the forefront by a variety of groups. Issues were identified at public meetings and involved input from user groups, landowners, adjacent residents, the Workgroup, as well as the general public. The following is a list of the major issues that this Management Plan will address:

1) OHV trespass and associated impacts such as trail proliferation, noise, dust, visual pollution, crop damage, and traffic congestion on private roads are excessively degrading to the environment and disturbing to the local residents.

2) Safety hazards such as open vertical mine shafts, road/trail washouts, holes in the lakebed, car bodies, worm tracks, trash on the lakebed, unlimited speed, etc., are causing personal injury, and property and resource damage.

3) Currently there is no guaranteed public access to El Mirage dry lake. This results in a trespass situation. The main access route is a rough and dusty road causing some visitors to avoid using it.

4) Litter (i.e., broken glass, scrap metal, nails, and dirty diapers) is unsanitary, unsightly, and poses a health and safety hazard to visitors of the area.

5) Sewage dumped from recreational vehicle holding tanks along routes of travel poses a health hazard to visitors and residents.

6) The lack of facilities, such as water and restrooms, limits the use of the Management Area for extended periods to those visitors with self-contained camping equipment.

7) The discharge of weapons (i.e., rifles, pistols, shotguns, and black powder) creates a safety hazard and results in an accumulation of trash and destroyed targets.

8) The various recreation activities occurring on the lakebed, both organized and unorganized, sometimes conflict with one another.

9) Adverse OHV user patterns such as riding OHVs on county maintained roads, riding on the lakebed when it is wet, circle racing, and the creation of "poof" dust courses are either illegal or destructive to the environment.

10) Commercial use, such as research and development, product testing, commercial photography, and vending, often occurs without authorization, and sometimes is in conflict with other users (commercial and recreational).

11) As a result of the rural nature of the El Mirage area, the influx of recreational visitors often creates excessive demands upon the area's emergency services.

12) Uncontrolled and uneducated public use of the Management Area is resulting in an unacceptable degradation of the natural resource base.

II. MANAGEMENT FOCUS

A. MANAGEMENT GOALS

This plan identifies the actions necessary to create and manage the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area during the next ten years, 1990-1999. The criteria used in developing the goals to guide the plan are outlined in the CDCA Plan, Bureau Policy, and State and Federal law. The following goals focus the management effort toward resolving the issues concerning public use of the El Mirage/Shadow Mountain Area. The goals are not listed in order of priority; they are all critical to the success of the Management Area.

1) Manage the setting in the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area for intensive outdoor recreation--allowing for the widest variety of activities possible--free from restrictive zoning.

2) Manage non-recreation activities to allow for the greatest variety of such uses and to ensure they result in minimal conflicts with recreational visitors.

3) Manage the lakebed surface to maintain its smooth condition, historical acreage, historical shoreline, and to provide unobstructed open space.

4) Mitigate impacts to the natural resource base within the boundaries of the Management Area to sustain long-term recreation use.

5) Involve the local residents and visitors in the day-to-day management of the area.

6) Provide sufficient visitor services within the Management Area and the zone of influence to ensure the health and safety of visitors, to enforce the law (relative to recreation activities), and to disseminate information necessary to achieve management goals.

7) Provide a minimal infrastructure of roads, facilities, and communications to provide the most basic visitor services.

8) Consolidate land within the Management Area into public ownership to eliminate the trespass situation, to provide access, and to enable BLM to effectively manage uses within a multiple-use context.

B. MANAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS/ASSUMPTIONS

This Management Plan addresses the issues identified by the involved public. However, the management actions must be consistent with previous BLM planning efforts and the applicable County, State and Federal laws. This consistency requirement resulted in the following constraints/assumptions:

(1) The CDCA Plan (1980, as amended) establishes the overall direction and guidance for management of the CDCA, which includes the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. All actions of this plan will be consistent with, or will amend, the CDCA Plan.

(2) An Interagency Agreement (1988) established the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area as a joint venture among the five parties to the agreement. This agreement defines roles and responsibilities for each of the signatories to the agreement.

(3) Acquisition and development will be consistent with the provisions of the State Department of Parks and Recreation, Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division.

(4) The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area will be managed under the principles of multiple-use, including but not limited to such activities as recreation, mining, grazing, and commercial filming.

(5) The Management Plan overall addresses uses on both public and private lands. It is recognized that many of the actions proposed within the Management Area cannot be implemented until the private land is acquired into public ownership. Management actions within the zone of influence will be consistent with applicable laws regarding the rights of private landowners and the objectives of neighboring communities.

III. MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A. ACQUISITION AND DESIGNATIONS AFFECTING LAND STATUS

Access

1) Acquire the following rights-of-way for the access roads into the Management Area: 1) from El Mirage Road to the main entrance, (Mountain View Drive, approximately 1 mile), 2) from Highway 395 to the eastern entrance (an unidentified route), and 3) from Old El Mirage Road to the western entrance (approximately .5 mile).

Discussion: Currently there is no permanent legal access into the Management Area. The BLM has been maintaining Mountain View Road as the primary access route since 1985 with the permission of the affected landowners. This has served as a temporary solution to provide access into the Management Area. A right-of-way will provide permanent public access to the main entrance of the Management Area.

The long-term solution for the eastern entrance is an access road to enter/exit HWY 395 near the southeast corner of section 24, T.7N., R.6W., SBM. The final design/location of the east entrance is dependent upon Caltrans making improvements to HWY 395; i.e., 2 lanes converted to 4, including acceleration lanes, deceleration lanes, and turn lanes.

Dependent upon the time table for this improvement to HWY 395, there may be a need for traffic to temporarily enter/exit HWY 395 one mile north of the proposed entrance. The location of this temporary access route takes into consideration vehicle safety hazards due to the rolling topography of existing HWY 395.

A right-of-way is also necessary to guarantee access on an existing connector route from the western entrance to Old El Mirage Road. Using this route as the western access will require the least amount of road work to establish the primary road network to and within the Management Area.

2) Manage public land in the zone of influence consistent with guidelines in the California Desert Conservation Plan 1980, as amended, and to reduce trespass.

Discussion: Currently there is a closure of all public land within the entire zone of influence. The purpose of this closure is to assure that inappropriate levels of OHV play are not

occurring outside and surrounding the Management Area. The closure prohibits all OHV play within the entire zone of influence. Within the zone of influence, 24 routes of travel remain (Illustration 3) "open" only for street legal vehicles. These 24 primary access routes are signed to prohibit OHV use of these routes.

The closure will be lifted after long-term actions have been taken to control OHV use. Such actions include designating and signing routes in the zone of influence (through the BLM Desert District route designation process), rehabilitating closed routes in the zone of influence, and signing or fencing the boundary of the Management Area. An inventory of routes was completed for public land within the northeastern portion of the Management Area (Illustration 4). This inventory will be used during the Desert District's route designation process for the area.

The assumption has been made that all potential problem areas, relative to inappropriate OHV play surrounding the Management Area, are within the zone of influence. The area north of the zone of influence and south of Edward Air Force Base will be closely monitored to assure that this assumption is correct.

Acquisition

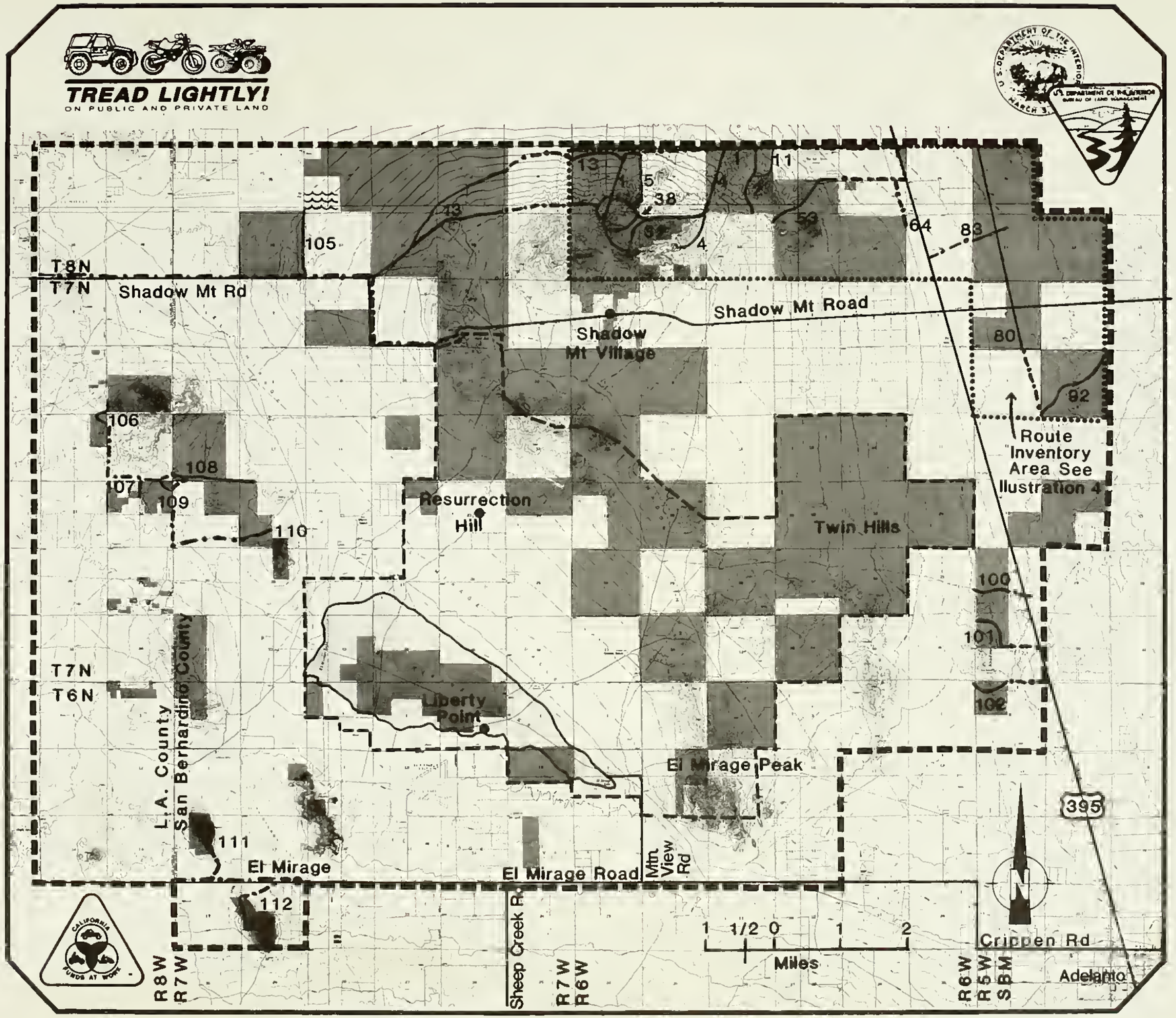
3) Initiate a land acquisition program (involving the donation, purchase, condemnation and/or exchange of land) to convert approximately 9,000 acres of private land to public land in five years.

Discussion: Adjusting the land tenure, and confining use within the boundaries by a barrier, will resolve several of the major issues. This will reduce trespass and associated problems, while creating a land status situation favorable for resource and visitor management.

San Bernardino County, as per the Interagency Agreement (1988) for the Management Area, will serve as the acquisition agent. The county will acquire the land in accordance with the acquisition guide for the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, Grant Programs, dated February 1989. Land will be appraised at fair market value. Acquired lands will be transferred to the BLM.

See Illustration 5 for the private land to be acquired as well as the priorities for acquisition. This is a tentative schedule, the actual acquisition will be dependent on fluctuations in the realty market. The largest parcels within each of the priority areas will be acquired first. Land acquisition will be an on-going process using the following steps to attain ownership/use of the land:
(a) Seek donation of private parcels.
(b) Acquire tax delinquent parcels.
(c) Purchase from willing landowners.

ILLUSTRATION 3



EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

ROUTES OF TRAVEL

3 — Routes currently open to street legal vehicles

Key routes on private land

Route Number on Map	Official Route No.
1	EF191
2	EF192
4	EF194
5	EF195
11	EF1911
13	EF1913
32	EF1932
38	EF1938
53	EF1953
64	EF1964
80	EF201
83	EF204
92	EF163
100	EF161
101	EF162
102	EF121
105	EF181
106	R1
107	R2
108	R3
109	R4
110	EF141
111	EF101
112	EF102

BOUNDARIES

- Management Area Boundary
- Zone of Influence Boundary
- Private Land
- Public Land
- State Land

Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District
Barstow Resource Area

ILLUSTRATION 4

R7W R6W R6W R5W

395

Princess Pat Mine Rd

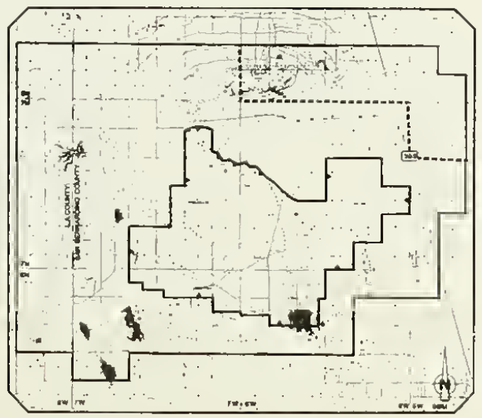
T8N
T7N
SBM

Shadow Mtn Village

Shadow Mtn Road

Route Key

Route Number on Map	Official Route No.		Route Number on Map	Official Route No.
1	EF191		50	EF1950
2	EF192		51	EF1951
3	EF193		52	EF1952
4	EF194		53	EF1953
5	EF195		54	EF1954
6	EF196		55	EF1955
7	EF197		56	EF1956
8	EF198		57	EF1957
9	EF199		58	EF1958
10	EF1910		59	EF1959
11	EF1911		60	EF1960
12	EF1912		61	EF1961
13	EF1913		62	EF1962
14	EF1914		63	EF1963
15	EF1915		64	EF1964
16	EF1916		65	EF1965
17	EF1917		66	EF1966
18	EF1918		67	EF1967
19	EF1919		68	EF1968
20	EF1920		69	EF1969
21	EF1921		70	EF1970
22	EF1922		---	-------
23	EF1923		---	-------
24	EF1924		---	-------
25	EF1925		---	-------
26	EF1926		---	-------
27	EF1927		---	-------
28	EF1928		---	-------
29	EF1929		---	-------
30	EF1930		---	-------
31	EF1931		80	EF201
32	EF1932		81	EF202
33	EF1933		82	EF203
34	EF1934		83	EF204
35	EF1935		84	EF205
36	EF1936		85	EF206
37	EF1937		---	------
38	EF1938		---	------
39	EF1939		---	------
40	EF1940		---	------
41	EF1941		90	EF161
42	EF1942		91	EF162
43	EF1943		92	EF163
44	EF1944		93	EF164
45	EF1945		94	EF165
46	EF1946		95	EF166
47	EF1947		98	EF167
48	EF1948		97	EF168
49	EF1949		98	EF169



ROUTE INVENTORY

Inventoried Route 99

Key Routes on Private Land

Private Land

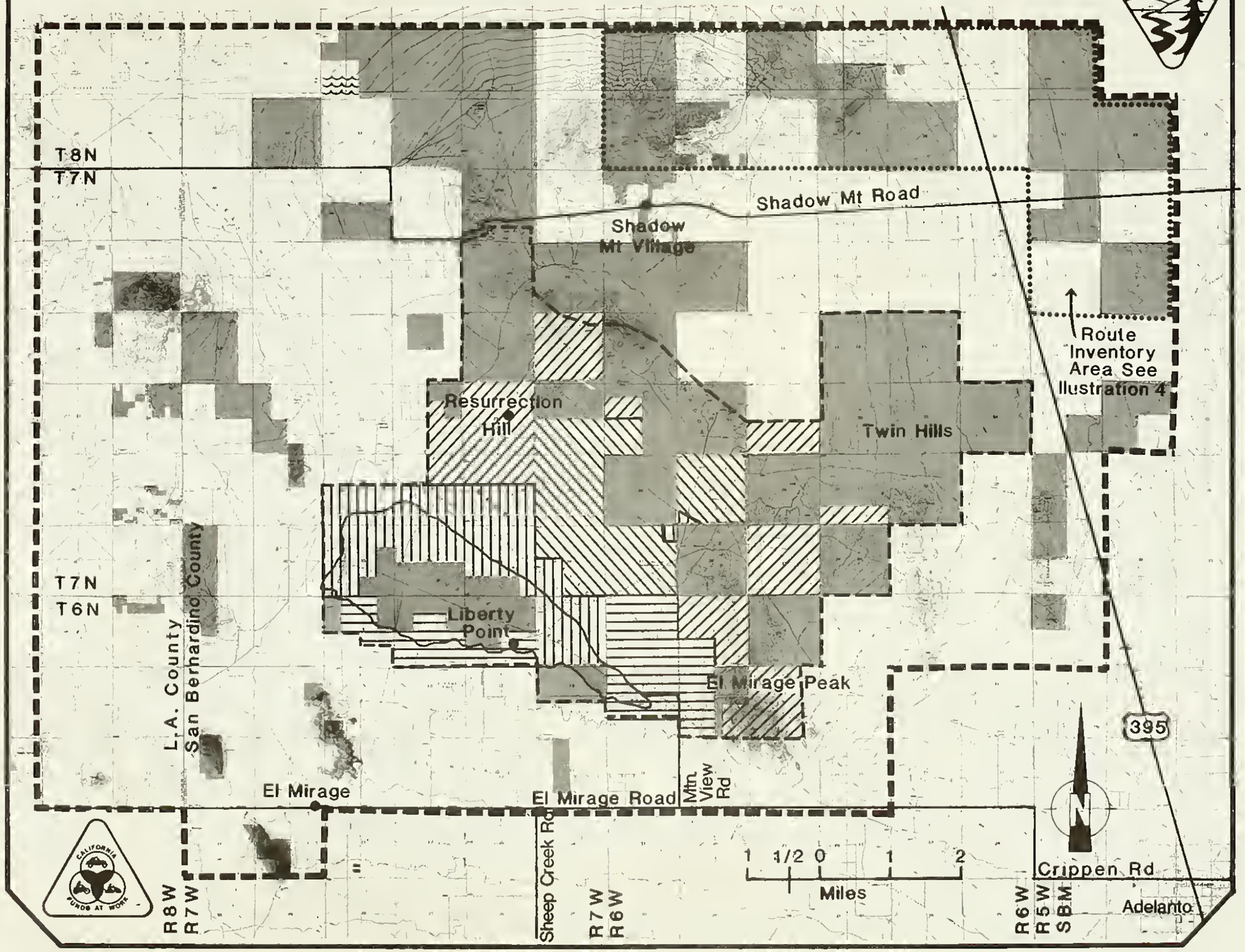
Public Land

1 1/2 0 1

Miles

395

TREAD LIGHTLY!
ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND



EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

LAND STATUS AND ACQUISITION PRIORITY

- First Phase
- Second Phase
- Third Phase
- Fourth Phase

BOUNDARIES

- Management Area Boundary
- Zone of Influence Boundary
- Private Land
- Public Land
- State Land

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(d) Exchange with willing landowners, for tracts of land greater than 640 acres.
(e) Exercise the right of eminent domain.
(f) Seek use agreements for private land.

Landowners may donate their land to the Management Area and will be encouraged to do so. Such donations will be appropriately recognized. Acquired land will be purchased at fair market value. Exchanges will be considered when a landowner owns parcels that exceed 640 acres. The focus for such exchanges will be on unclassified public land within the zone of influence (see Illustration 2).

If landowners are not willing to sell at fair market value, San Bernardino County will exercise the right of eminent domain according to standard county procedures. In the event that acquisition funds become limited in the future, use agreements will be sought for private land within the Management Area.

Consistent with BLM policy, both the surface and subsurface estate will be acquired where possible. Any existing claims will be subject to validation.

4) Acquire parcels outside, but adjacent to, the Management Area that become available through donations, tax default, or exchanges, if they increase the recreation value of the Management Area and do not conflict with the interest of bordering communities.

Discussion: Opportunities may exist to acquire parcels of private land adjacent to the Management Area at a very low cost. Doing so will increase the recreation opportunities within the Management Area.

5) Acquire the central inholding (acquisition phase 4) at the end of the initial 5 year acquisition program, provided there is funding and recreational use warrants such acquisition.

Discussion: A determination will be made approximately three years into the land acquisition program as to whether or not it is viable to acquire the central inholding (see Illustration 5). Specific information will be available at that time concerning acquisition costs and recreation use levels.

The original scoping for the Management Area concluded that the Management Area was viable with a large central inholding. This remains valid, however, the central inholding represents a large portion of the El Mirage Valley. Acquiring this inholding will greatly increase the amount of land available for recreation use, reduce long-term crowding and congestion, increase visitor safety, and reduce the potential for conflicts with private developments.

Inholding Management

6) *Manage the public lands around the central inholding (until acquired), to reduce OHV trespass within the central inholding while at the same time allowing the landowners free access to their land.*

Discussion: Recognizing that intensive OHV use will be allowed on public land surrounding the inholding, the possibility exist for inadvertent trespass to occur on a regular basis. To assist with containing OHV use on public land, the boundary of the central inholding will be signed and BLM Rangers will assist with enforcement of trespass laws. The private land in the inholding will be treated in a manner similar to private land surrounding the Management Area in the zone of influence.

Inholding landowners, their relatives, friends, and guests, must all pay entrance fees if they operate recreational vehicles within the Management Area, or if they engage in, or observe recreational activities at any location other than on their own property. Landowners operating OHV recreational vehicles within the central inholding are subject to compliance with all appropriate local and state trespass laws.

CDCA Plan Amendments

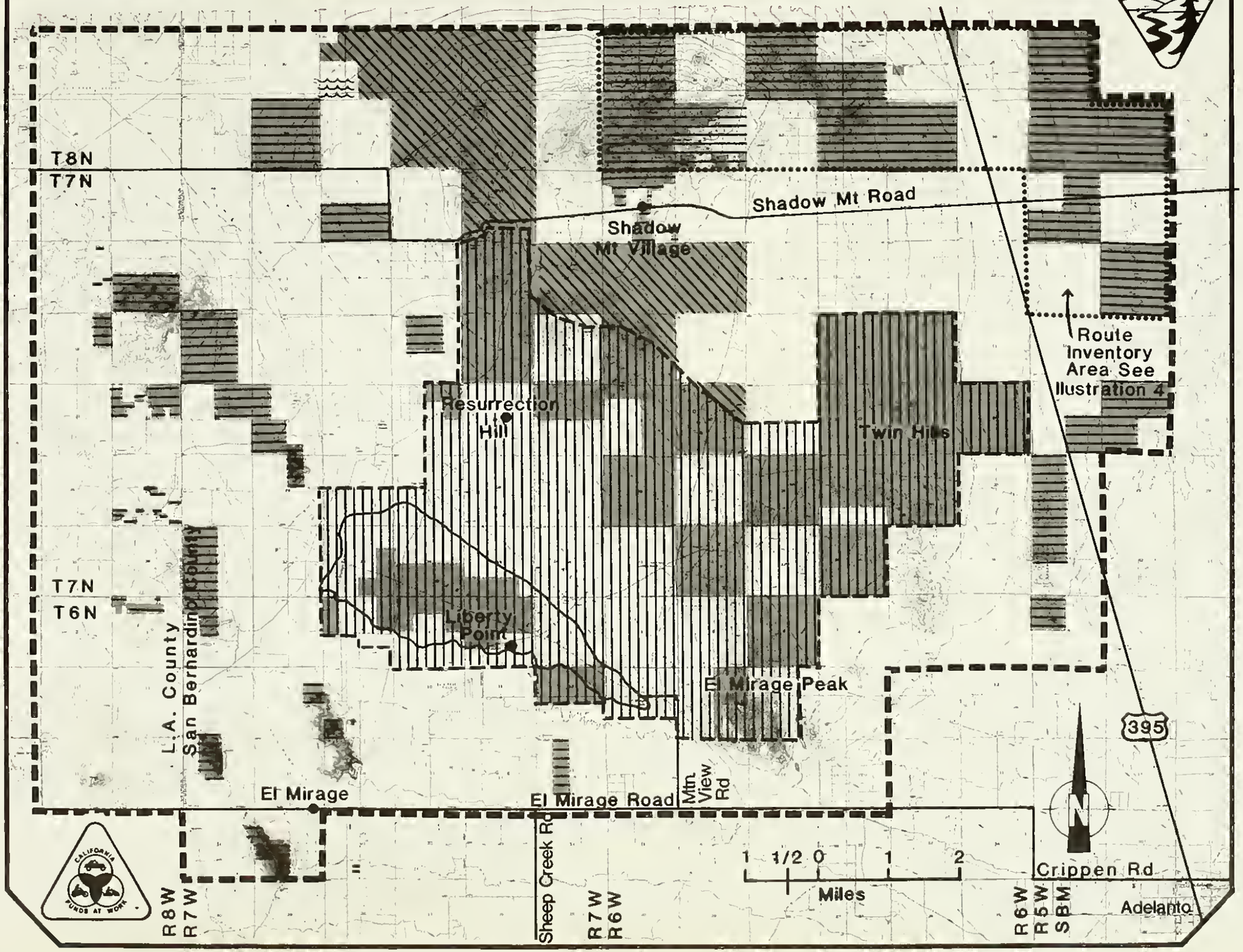
7) *Classify as multiple use class (MUC) "I" (intensive) and vehicle access designation "open" all existing public land within the Management Area, and all land that is acquired in the future.*

Discussion: One of the main goals in establishing the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area is to provide the public long-term opportunities for outdoor recreation, primarily OHV use. This action will ultimately designate approximately 24,400 acres of land for multiple uses, including intensive motorized vehicle recreation. The CDCA Plan will be amended to reflect the management actions contained in this plan. The amendments primarily reflect a change in multiple-use classes (from unclassified to classified) and corresponding changes in vehicle access designations (Illustration 6).

8) *Classify as MUC "M" (moderate) and vehicle access designation "limited" the public land within the following sections which are within the zone of influence north of the Management Area, and south, and west of Shadow Mountain Village:*
Location:
T.7N. R.6W. Secs. 7, 8, and 18;
T.7N. R.7W. Secs. 2, 12, and 13;
T.8N. R.7W. Secs. 26, 27, 28, 34, and 35.

ILLUSTRATION 6

TREAD LIGHTLY!
ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND



EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

PLAN AMENDMENTS

MUC Intensive
VAD Open
MUC Moderate
VAD Limited
MUC Unclassified
VAD Limited

MUC = Multiple Use Class
VAD = Vehicle Access Designation

BOUNDARIES

- Management Area Boundary
- Zone of Influence Boundary
- Private Land
- Public Land
- State Land

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Discussion: It was determined that these 5,600 acres (approximately) would be held in public ownership (rather than being unclassified and available for disposal) to more effectively control existing trespass and inappropriate OHV use patterns. The other public land within the zone of influence will remain unclassified and be available for disposal as per the 1980 CDCA Plan, as amended, and the Record of Decision for the Land Tenure Adjustment Project.

The location of the northern boundary of the Management Area is a result of an agreement reached in 1985 among the residents of Shadow Mountain Village, the user groups of the El Mirage area, and the BLM. Central to this agreement was the understanding that OHV play would not be allowed within the Shadow Mountain Valley. This action does not affect that agreement.

Withdrawals

9) *Withdraw the entire lakebed (historical size) and the location of the headquarters complex from all mineral entry.*

Discussion: The recreational value of the lakebed is such that the lakebed should be protected from any disturbances associated with exploration and/or mining activities. Initial mineral surveys indicate there is a low potential for minerals to be located at the site of the headquarters complex. The location is central to the Management Area, and the public funds and time invested in developing the site will be considerable. Furthermore, any mining activity at the headquarters complex will result in a disruption to visitor services (refer to appendix A - Resource Data for a more complete description of the area's mineral potential).

An environmental assessment will be completed according to the procedures for a mineral withdrawal.

B. AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES

Permits/Vending

1) *Issue permits for educational, commercial, non-profit and organized recreation activities for use throughout the Management Area.*

Discussion: Due to its close proximity to major commerce and population centers, the Management Area is used for a multitude of purposes, including recreation, education, commercial, and

philanthropic causes. The permitting process will allow these many uses to occur while minimizing conflicts with the casual recreational visitor. Certain permitted uses and activities may require temporary restrictions within portions of the Management Area. All permitted activities will be closely monitored to ensure their compatibility with the resources and the safety and well-being of other visitors.

Vending permits will be issued for the sale of foods, beverages, goods, and services. Vendors must have the applicable state and county permits and licenses for their business. Vendors must be self contained, travel on existing routes, and may not interfere with other authorized uses or create unacceptable impacts.

2) *Issue all permits according to Bureau policy, and the guidelines and procedures established for the Management Area. The guidelines and procedures may be updated and changed periodically by the Project Manager as necessary to effect management goals.*

Discussion: Guidelines and procedures, as outlined in Appendix B, have been established to reduce conflicts among the various permitted users of the Management Area. To facilitate permitting use on the lakebed, it has been divided into six permit sections (Illustration 7).

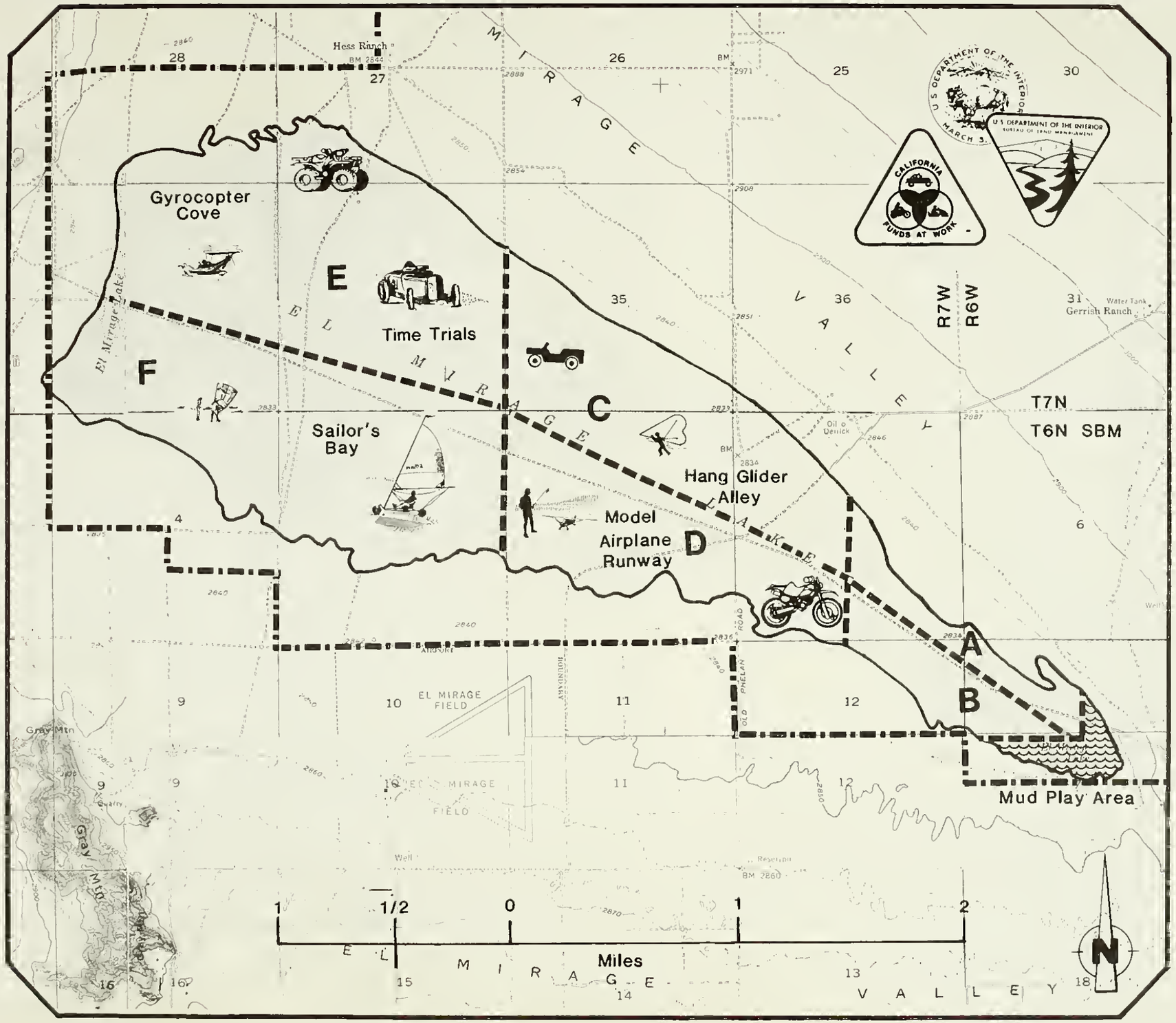
3) *Prohibit the following vending operations within the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area (the list will be periodically updated at the Project Manager's discretion):*
   (a) The sale of beverages in glass containers.
   (b) The rental of 3-wheeled ATVs.
   (c) The sale of paint.
   (d) The sale or rental of equipment used for war games, such as paint guns or paint pellets.
   (e) The sale of fireworks.

Concession Operations

4) *Issue long term leases to operate concessions within the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area provided the services/goods comply with the criteria for vending permits and meet the BLM's management goals.*

Discussion: Currently there is no identified need to issue long-term leases for concession operations. Concessions will not be authorized for services that are readily available in the adjacent communities.

ILLUSTRATION 7



EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

LAKE BED MANAGEMENT

- A/B — Permit Section
- Sailor's Bay — Directed Use Area
- Mud Play Area
- Management Area Boundary

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Grazing and Mining

5) Allow grazing and mining within the Management Area.

Discussion: Multiple-use natural resource management can continue within the Management Area with a minimum impact on recreational use of the area. Grazing and mining operators must operate in compliance with existing laws, regulations, and procedures established for the CDCA. Mining will not be allowed in areas which have been withdrawn from mineral entry.

Military Uses

6) Allow military exercises within the Management Area with the appropriate authorizations.

Discussion: Authorized exercises must be compatible with the goals and management actions stated within the Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. There is a long history of the military performing exercises in the vicinity of the lakebed. Previous exercises have proven compatible with other uses of the area, and therefore, they should be allowed to continue.

Rights-Of-Way

7) All existing rights-of-way within the Management Area will be recognized.

Discussion: Rights-of-way within the Management Area include authorization for utility lines across the east end of the lakebed. These lines are currently on private land that is identified for acquisition. There is also a right-of-way across private and public land at the east end of the Management Area parallel to Highway 395. These rights-of-way are an integral aspect of the regional infrastructure.

8) Allow new rights-of-way through the Management Area provided they have no long-term effect on existing uses.

Discussion: New utility and transportation rights-of-way will be allowed with the stipulation that they have no impact on existing uses other than temporary disruptions caused by construction activities. Future rights-of-way (excluding those necessary for development of facilities for the Management Area) are being limited to underground installation due to the intensive use of the surface and air space within the boundaries of the Management Area.

C. VISITOR MANAGEMENT

Recreation Activities

1) Allow all types of activities to occur within the Management Area, except those activities that create unacceptable safety concerns or unnecessarily degrade the environment.

Discussion: The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area has historically been a place where the only limit to what occurs is the imagination. All historic recreational activities will be allowed to occur except those that include the following:
(a) Discharge of firearms.
(b) Hunting.
(c) Hare and Hound OHV events.

This list of prohibited activities will periodically be reviewed based upon resource monitoring and visitor use information. New activities will be allowed within the Management Area if they are not in conflict with existing uses, and they do not create unacceptable safety concerns or unnecessarily degrade the environment.

In southern California, there is a high demand for sites to launch model rockets. It is currently not legal to operate model rockets within the Management Area. The BLM will work with user groups and San Bernardino County to determine if it is possible to designate the lakebed a legal launch site.

2) Allow visitors to engage in the activities of their choice at any location on the lakebed, provided they do not interfere with the health and safety of other visitors.

Discussion: Visitors have historically engaged in the activities of their choice at any location. Some activities require a certain degree of isolation from other vehicular or air traffic, therefore, some user groups have selected certain areas to engage in their activities. Over time, these use patterns have developed into historical settings which will be identified as directed use areas on brochure maps (Illustration 7).

Activities on the lakebed will be monitored to detect conflicts among various uses (Section III-G). Increased visitor use of the lakebed or changes in the types of activities may warrant zoning use on the lakebed in the future. This issue will be addressed with the Cooperating Association (Section III-C; Volunteer Program) to ensure that the needs of the various user groups are being met.

3) Close the lakebed to aircraft landings and take-offs from one half (1/2) hour after sunset to one half (1/2) hour before sunrise.

Discussion: Due to the extensive variety of activities occurring on the lakebed on a 24 hour basis, it is not safe, nor practical to have aircraft taking off and landing on the lakebed when it is dark.

4) Establish a mud play area east and south of the utility poles, approximately 400 yards wide, as identified in Illustration 7.

Discussion: Although the lakebed has been closed to vehicle use where wet since 1985, there has been an outpouring of public demand for an area to engage in OHV mud play. In response to this demand, the eastern end of the lakebed has been set aside for this activity. A vehicle barrier will be constructed between the lakebed and the mud play area.

5) Recognize national aircraft and vehicle rights-of-way protocol for the operation of vehicles and aircraft within the Management Area, and establish operating guidelines and supplemental rules to reduce conflicts and impacts from the use of such conveyances.

Discussion: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is responsible for regulating and policing the use of airspace over the Management Area. They have developed several laws which govern the use of aircraft, including ultralights. Personnel assigned to the Management Area will work with the FAA to ensure compliance with laws regulating the use of airspace. Aircraft rights-of-way (CFR 14, section 91.67) to be enforced within the Management Area include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) When aircraft of the same category are converging at about the same altitude the aircraft to the right has the right-of-way.
(b) In the air, a balloon has the right-of-way over any other category of aircraft; a glider has the right-of-way over an airplane or rotorcraft. Aircraft towing other aircraft have the right-of-way over all other engine-driven aircraft. Ultralights shall yield to all aircraft.
(c) Each aircraft that is being overtaken has the right-of-way.
(d) Aircraft landing have the right-of-way.

Flying craft utilizing the Management Area will be encouraged, in printed brochures, not to fly over the inhabited areas outside of the Management Area except:

(a) Summer & Spring: During the hours of 8:00AM - 8:00PM.
(b) Winter & Fall : During the hours of 8:00AM - 4:00PM.
(c) At an elevation no lower than 500'.

Furthermore, guidelines and supplemental rules will be adopted for the operation of tethered aircraft towing operations on the lakebed (hang-gliders, para-sailors, gliders, gyrocopters, etc.). The guidelines will be formulated through coordination with the involved user groups and the appropriate professional organizations.

Similar guidelines and supplemental rules will be adopted where necessary for ground based activities. This includes establishing a supplemental rule giving the right-of-way to non-motorized craft over motorized craft on the ground. Additional constraints may be required if zoning of the lakebed is determined appropriate in the future. All such discussions will involve representatives from the affected activities.

Camping

6) Allow camping throughout the entire Management Area with the following exceptions:

(a) On the lakebed, camping is restricted to within 100 feet of the shoreline, natural mounds, or jetties; except in the case of permitted events.

(b) Around the perimeter of the Management Area, camping is not allowed within 100 feet of the barrier, except in sections 14 and 15 of T.7N., R.6W., SBM, in the Twin Hills area where camping is restricted to 500 feet from the perimeter barrier.

(c) Camping is not permitted within the headquarters complex, or in/on any of the facilities.

Discussion: Visitors are free to camp almost anywhere they wish throughout the Management Area and along the lakebed perimeter. However, camping is not allowed "out in the open" on the lakebed, more than 100' away from the shore. This restriction is to avoid creating excessive congestion or possible safety hazards on the lakebed.

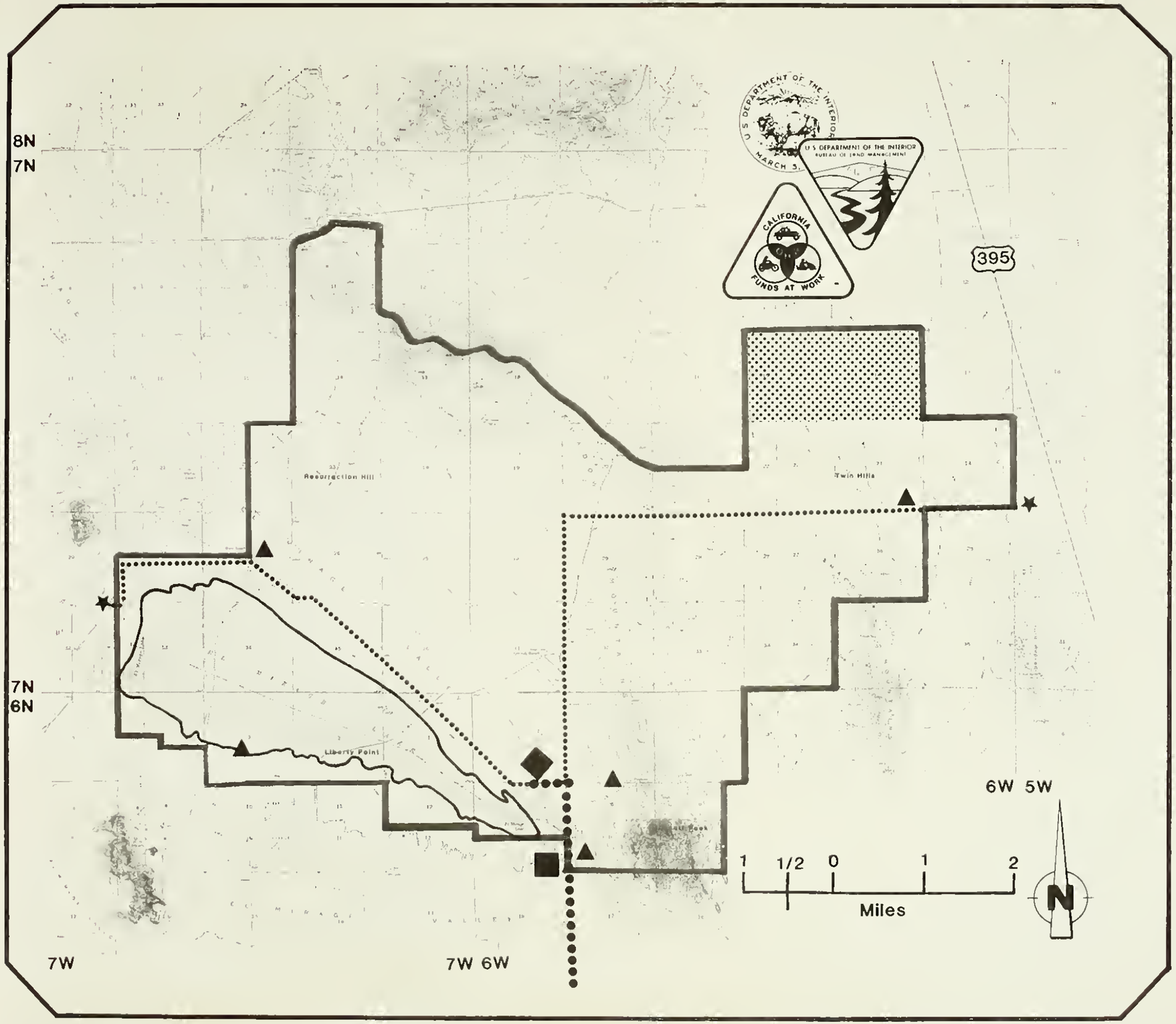
Camping and OHV staging activities are closely associated with vehicle access. Camping will be encouraged in the existing heavily used areas by maintaining the access and by locating the restrooms in these areas.

There is a 14-day limit on camping within the Management Area.

7) Designate sections 14 and 15 of T.7N., R.6W., SBM, in the Twin Hills area as a reserved group camping area (Illustration 8)

Discussion: The Management Area has historically been used by large groups for camping and staging in association with the use of OHVs. These groups often attempt to camp in isolated locations away from other visitors. Given the projected increase in use, it

ILLUSTRATION 8



EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

FACILITIES

- Main Entrance Station
- Secondary Entrance
- Restroom
- Headquarters Complex
- Paved Access Road
- Primary Road
- Perimeter Barrier
- Reserved Camping Section

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is foreseeable that the opportunities for such camping may become limited. The Twin Hills area was selected as a group camping area because it is removed from the main access road and the majority of traffic. In addition, this area is readily accessible by primary vehicles.

Procedures for Group Camping Reservations:

a) The group camping area will be made available only by reservation. Reservations may be made by phone or mail on a first come, first serve basis. Minimum group size is 25 people and only one group is allowed per section at a time.
b) A $25.00 deposit must be paid within five days of the reserved date to guarantee a reservation, and to ensure the site is left in a clean condition. The deposit will be refunded the first working day after the date of use. The deposit is forfeited if the site requires clean-up, or if the reservation is cancelled within five days of the reserved date.
c) There is no camping within 500' of the perimeter barrier in the reserved group camping area.

Fees

8) Charge fees for each primary vehicle entering the Management Area (except those persons on official business and inholding landowners).

Discussion: The perimeter of the entire Management Area will be fenced and all access will be controlled. Entrance fees will be collected and placed in a trust fund upon completion of the entrance station. Monies in the trust fund will be returned to the Management Area to offset operation and maintenance costs.

Fees will be collected by personnel working at the entrance station. The main entrance will be open 24 hours every day. The east and west entrances will only be open during major holiday weekends. When the entrance station is not staffed, the Rangers will make contact with visitors for the purpose of collecting fees.

Fees may be waived for those persons visiting on official business and participants of an activity for which a permit was issued. Season passes will be sold and issued to individuals. Only one primary vehicle a day may enter the Management Area with the same season pass. Season passes purchased for State Vehicle Recreation Areas (SVRAs) will be honored and likewise the season passes sold at the Management Area will be recognized by the SVRAs.

Entrance fees will be adjusted periodically to remain comparable with fees charged at State Vehicle Recreation Areas, County Parks, and private motorcycle parks.

The initial entrance fees (1990) were set as follows:
(a) $5 per vehicle - daily rate, 14 day camping limit.
(b) $40 seasonal pass - unlimited access for one calendar year.

9) Issue gate keys to permit holders and/or landowners for the east and west entrances on a limited basis and only for special situations when a clear need has been identified.

Discussion: The purpose for putting up a barrier around the Management Area is to control access. There are no county roads that provide access through the Management Area. To this extent, all gates other than the main entrance station will remain closed and locked, except the west and east entrances which will be open during major holiday weekends.

This action will allow controlled access through the east and west entrances under special circumstances when they are normally closed. Keys may be issued for permitted events when doing so would reduce congestion and safety concerns from high volumes of traffic traversing the Management Area.

Keys may be issued to landowners for the west entrance under the following guidelines:
(a) Own land within one mile of the west entrance. The land must have been developed prior to November of 1988.
(b) Purchase an annual pass.
(c) Sign a register.
(d) Pay a $5 key deposit.
(e) Abide by the Management Area rules.
(f) Key may only be used by the person to whom the key was issued, or members of their immediate family.
(g) Key is property of the Cooperative Management Area and is non-transferable.

Law Enforcement

10) Provide law enforcement services by: 1) hiring, equipping, and training BLM law enforcement Rangers to work within, and adjacent to, the Management Area; 2) signing an agreement with the San Bernardino County Sheriff delegating the Rangers the authority to enforce county and state laws; and 3) coordinating with the San Bernardino County Sheriff Reserve Deputies for patrolling within and adjacent to the Management Area.

Discussion: The major issue confronting the Management Area is the uncontrolled use of OHVs and the resulting trespass situation in adjacent communities. The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area will only be successful when OHV use is controlled within the zone of influence, and confined to the Management Area.

Under the present situation, the County Sheriff and the California Highway Patrol are responsible for enforcing all laws in the communities surrounding the Management Area. This will not change. The Los Angeles and San Bernardino County Sheriff Offices (S.O.) along with the California Highway Patrol (CHP) will continue to be the primary providers of law enforcement in the communities adjacent to the Management Area.

The BLM will be hiring, training, and equipping three law enforcement Rangers to serve on the Management Area staff. As part of their duties, these Rangers will be assisting the Sheriff and the CHP in controlling the illegal OHV recreation related use within the zone of influence surrounding the Management Area.

An agreement between the Sheriff of San Bernardino County and the BLM will be developed to enable law enforcement Rangers to enforce state and county laws relative to OHV use on private land within the zone of influence. The law enforcement Rangers will then perform intermittent patrols on public and private lands adjacent to the Management Area to ensure that visitors are complying with area closures and trespass laws.

The supervisory BLM law enforcement Ranger will establish procedures for coordinating the use of San Bernardino County Reserve Deputies for providing law enforcement within and adjacent to the Management Area on special occasions or when the need arises. The Supervisory Ranger will also develop, publish, and implement a series of supplemental rules to provide the mechanism to enforce the actions necessary for management of the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area (Appendix C).

11) Establish the following functional priorities for the law enforcement Rangers within the Management Area:
- *(a) Enforce all laws relating to resource protection and visitor management.*
- *(b) Provide emergency services: first aid/fire.*
- *(c) Provide mutual aid to other agencies.*
- *(d) Assist with information and interpretation programs.*
- *(e) Assist with maintenance functions.*

Discussion: The priority function of law enforcement Rangers is resource protection. Conservation laws will be vigorously enforced and include those relating to the protection of vegetation, wildlife, and the "pack it in-pack it out" trash philosophy. There will be compliance checks at the entrance for equipment and registration.

Rangers will continue to respond to requests for visitor assistance and will be EMT qualified and equipped. However, there will be one full-time and two part-time EMT personnel working within the Management Area to assume the primary emergency response function.

The primary focus of all law enforcement contacts within the Management Area will be visitor education and interpretation.

Emergency Medical Services

12) Provide emergency medical services by: 1) hiring, equipping, and training EMT/visitor services Rangers to provide first aid and visitor services within, and adjacent to, the Management Area; and 2) cooperating with other agencies according to the provisions contained in an emergency medical services operating plan.

Discussion: The EMT/visitor services Rangers will consist of one permanent full-time and two permanent part-time personnel. The visitor services personnel will respond to medical emergencies in the immediate vicinity of the Management Area according to established provisions in existing mutual aid agreements.

Currently first aid is provided within the zone of influence through interagency cooperation among the BLM, California Department of Forestry (CDF), CHP, El Mirage Volunteer Fire Department (E.M.V.F.D.), San Bernardino S.O., and a private ambulance firm. This working relationship will not change. Agency response procedures and priorities for medical emergencies within the Management Area are outlined in an emergency response plan. This plan involves dispatchers for the BLM, CDF, CHP, County S.O., E.M.V.F.D., and Valley Ambulance in Victorville, and includes automatic dispatch orders for incidents with serious injuries.

The emergency medical services operating plan will be reviewed each year by the supervisory BLM Ranger and updated as necessary.

13) Establish the following functional priorities for the EMT/visitor service Rangers:

(a) Serve as the primary responders to medical emergencies within the Management Area.

(b) Assist other agencies adjacent to the Management Area through mutual aid agreements.

(c) Assist with the information and interpretation program.

(d) Assist the law enforcement Rangers with vehicle registration compliance.

(e) Perform maintenance functions.

Discussion: All patrol personnel (law enforcement and EMT/visitor service) will be EMT qualified and equipped. The EMT/visitor services Rangers' primary function is to provide emergency medical care to visitors.

Fire Management

14) Train and equip Management Area personnel to initiate fire suppression efforts.

Discussion: Increased visitor populations will raise the potential for both wildland and vehicle related fires. A coordinated suppression effort among Management Area staff, the BLM California Desert Fire Management Office, and the El Mirage V.F.D. will be critical in protecting resource values, physical structures, and the health and safety of visitors. A mutual response plan will be prepared involving the aforementioned parties.

Currently the EL Mirage V.F.D. is primarily funded via a tax assessment district that includes the entire Management Area. As a result of the acquisition program, private land within boundaries of the Management Area will be acquired into federal ownership and no longer subject to this tax assessment. The operating revenue potential for the El Mirage V.F.D. from the assessment district will be reduced.

These effects were recognized by the El Mirage V.F.D. when it was formed in 1986. Representatives from the community of El Mirage participated in the Workgroup that prepared the *Feasibility Study for the El Mirage/Shadow Mountains* (1986). In a good faith effort, BLM has agreed to work closely with the El Mirage V.F.D. to minimize the impacts of this potential loss in revenue. Such efforts may include such things as making surplus fire fighting equipment available to the E.M.V.F.D.

Volunteer Program

15) Establish a Cooperating Association through which all volunteer activities will be coordinated.

Discussion: To a large extent, the Management Area results from the efforts of several individuals and groups who utilize the El Mirage area for recreation. This action will provide a means by which they may remain active in the operation of the Management Area.

A cooperating association will help assure that the focus and direction of the Management Area remain in the best interest of the visitors and the adjacent communities. This will also provide an avenue for tasks to be accomplished within the Management Area that require additional resources beyond the capability of the staff or budget.

Volunteers will be used for resource management, maintenance and visitor service functions including, but not limited to:
(a) Providing routine visitor service patrols.

(b) Staffing a visitor contact station.
(c) Maintaining facilities and equipment.
(d) Preparing and presenting interpretive programs.
(e) Assisting with OHV compliance checks.
(f) Managing special projects.

The Southern California Timing Association has expressed interest in constructing a memorial within the Management Area. The memorial would be in recognition of racers who have lost their lives and to others who have made significant accomplishments. There may also be a need to recognize other historic uses of the Management Area as well as large scale volunteer efforts. "Living Memorials" will be encouraged. An entry station or some other facility would certainly benefit future visitors as well as recognize past accomplishments. Memorials will be constructed at the expense of the involved organization.

Signs and Information

16) Erect and maintain directional, informational, and regulatory signs in accordance with the sign plan for the Management Area. The sign plan will be periodically updated as necessary.

Discussion: Signing the Management Area and major access roads will be in accordance with Bureau policy and the sign plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. This sign plan is an operational handbook that details specific standards, locations, and maintenance schedules for all signs.

Directional signs will guide visitors to the Management Area from the major highways in the high desert: Highways 14, 15, 18, 138, and 395. These are a combination of federal, state, and county highways.

Informational signs will be located at the entrance to the Management Area to inform visitors of the location of facilities, the rules and regulations, and the identity of the parties responsible for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area.

Regulatory signs will be located throughout the Management Area and the zone of influence to control traffic, and to advise visitors of specific regulations, such as lakebed closure when wet.

17) Develop a visitor contact station for the purposes of providing visitor information and first aid.

Discussion: A small visitor contact station will be developed to provide visitor services. The type of visitor services to be provided include answering public inquiries and providing maps and brochures, directions, and first aid.

Information will be available concerning OHV opportunities, plus cultural and natural resources of the high desert. Emphasis will be on the safe and responsible use of OHVs to enhance rider enjoyment and safety, while attempting to minimize impacts to the natural environment.

A 24-hour recorded message phone line will also be installed and operated to include the following information:
(a) Weather conditions.
(b) Special restriction/closures.
(c) Special events.
(d) Fee schedule.
(e) An emergency phone number.

18) Staff the visitor contact station with a combination of staff personnel and volunteers.

Discussion: Once established, the visitor contact station will be staffed on a regular part-time basis by personnel from the BLM and the volunteers. Initially the visitor contact station will be open from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, staffed with BLM personnel. As the Cooperating Association is developed, the goal is to expand the hours of operation to 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. on weekends through the use of volunteers.

These are target hours of operation that may require adjustment according to staffing and work load needs. Brochures and maps will be available on the outside of the building on a 24 hour basis. In addition, a public telephone will be located outside of the visitor contact station for reporting accidents on a 24 hour basis.

19) Develop an area specific brochure for distribution to the visitors containing such information as boundaries of the Management Area, rules and regulations, riding tips, and general information specific to the area.

Discussion: The brochure will provide visitors with the information and knowledge they need for a safe and enjoyable visit to the Management Area.

The brochures will be reprinted every other year to replenish inventories and to allow an opportunity for updates.

20) Publish an informational flyer every other month for distribution to the visitors.

Discussion: The flyer will include such things as upcoming events, seasonal tips, safety tips, and current events concerning recreation. These handouts will be available at the main entry station and will be used by all patrol personnel when making visitor contacts to explain resource protection and safety concerns.

21) Develop a self-guided tour brochure to interpret and explain various cultural, geographic, and botanical points-of-interest within the Management Area.

Discussion: Points of interest will be identified on the ground with numbered stakes correlated to the brochure. There are numerous cultural and historic sites of interest within the Management Area that are worth interpreting. In addition, the geologic history relative to the creation of the dry lakebed is very intriguing.

The remote potential also exist for isolated populations of sensitive plant species to exist within the Management Area. Such populations will be protected and included in the self-guided tour.

The development of an interpretation program is intended to reduce impacts on the environment and to satisfy normal desires for knowledge and information concerning the area's past history.

D. RESOURCE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Lakebed Management

1) Allow no activities on the lakebed that will result in a disturbance to the surface of the lakebed, other than that which is normally caused by the passing of a vehicle.

Discussion: El Mirage Dry Lakebed is the special feature that makes the Management Area such a popular destination for such a large variety of recreational uses. This natural resource is fragile and requires special consideration to ensure its availability for use in the future.

No surface disturbances are allowed (other than those authorized for conservation purposes), and it is illegal to alter the surface of the lakebed. The lakebed is closed when wet or muddy. Surface disturbances that inadvertently occur must be repaired according to "lakebed repair standards", (Appendix D). This applies to both permitted commercial and recreational activities, as well as to the use by individual visitors.

Permitted events on the lakebed will be required to comply with special permit stipulations which may include spraying the lakebed with water, or a retardant, to reduce fugitive dust.

For purposes of lakebed management, the mud play area (Illustration 7) is not considered part of the lakebed proper.

2) *Remove dirt mounds from high traffic areas, fill holes and depressions, clear off vegetation, and take action as necessary to maintain an open, smooth, and hard packed lakebed surface.*

Discussion: In the last few decades, wind and water erosion have greatly increased on the lakebed due to the amount of human activity, and the surface is now in the process of changing.

In some areas, the operation of vehicles on the lakebed while it was wet has resulted in a change in the structure of the clay, breaking it up and leaving it less compacted. This breakdown in the integrity of the hard packed surface allows vegetation to become established, which in turn provides a small windbreak that leads to an accumulation of soil. The deposited soil is of a different composition than the rest of the lakebed, and it dilutes the concentration of clay. In addition, repeated vehicle use over and over in one place pulverizes the lakebed surface and generates "poof" dust, which ends up as fugitive dust during windstorms. The net result of this process is the rapid loss of the smooth, hard-packed lakebed surface.

To further complicate matters, the pumping of water from wells in the area is lowering the water table. This affects the lakebed by causing the underlying levels of the lakebed to dry out, resulting in large deep cracks across the lakebed surface.

Some of the work that will be accomplished on the lakebed to retain an open, hard packed surface includes: the removal of recent vegetation from within the historical acreage of the lakebed surface, the removal of dirt mounds from high traffic areas and locations where they restrict use on the lakebed, the filling in of holes and depressions wherever they occur, and the placing of more openings in the existing man-made levees across the lakebed.

Vegetation Management

3) *On public land in the affected environment, plant vegetation, on a limited basis, to replace vegetation destroyed as a result of recreational activities.*

Discussion: Vegetation affects all other natural resources and is the resource that is most easily managed. Maintaining appropriate levels of vegetative cover will minimize soil loss, provide and restore wildlife habitat, assist in maintaining a spatial distribution of visitors, provide plant diversity, and contribute to the visual quality of the area.

There are no known threatened or endangered plant species within the Management Area. As part of the interpretive program, inventories will be conducted in areas where the potential exists for remnant stands of such plants.

The recreationists that visit El Mirage are attracted to Joshua trees for camping. Unfortunately the Joshua trees in several popular camping areas have been lost by acts of vandalism including burning and shooting.

Specific campsites will not be designated within the Management Area. To encourage use of historic camping areas, destroyed trees will be replaced with either transplanted Joshua trees, or other types of native desert species.

Different types of vegetation that may be used will include species that are faster growing and more tolerant of human abuse than Joshua trees. Some of these types of vegetation include palo verde, cat claw, ironwood, and mesquite. All species planted will be native desert vegetation that will, over time, grow independent of supplemental watering.

The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area has been identified as a recipient site for Joshua trees displaced as a result of development throughout the high desert. In addition, donations will be sought through the Cooperating Association for equipment, funds, and manpower, for use in transplanting Joshua trees to within the Management Area.

Within the Management Area, the no camping area within 100' of the perimeter barrier will be designated as a Joshua tree preserve. Planting Joshua trees here will provide a visual buffer around the Management Area, and establish habitat for wildlife.

4) *Install vehicle barriers, on a limited basis, to protect vegetation and to control traffic.*

Discussion: Within areas that are intensely used for camping and day use, Joshua trees, grasses, and shrubs will be maintained in small islands protected by barriers. These islands of vegetation may vary in size and contain several trees. In addition, barriers may be installed along primary roads as necessary to direct use and protect vegetation. The barriers may consist of signs, rocks, post & cable, fence, culverts, embankments, or similar devices.

5) *Use temporary closures to restrict vehicle traffic for short periods of time within the Management Area to allow the implementation of conservation measures.*

Discussion: Temporary vehicle restrictions will provide protection to small areas within the Management Area where conservation measures are being implemented. Potential sites for these restrictions include steep hillsides where trails are located on soils with a poor ability to withstand erosion; on the lakebed where holes or depressions have formed; along major trails where a route has experienced excessive widening; or in areas damaged by heavy use, fire, commercial activity, or other means. Such

restrictions may also be used for the protection of wildlife habitat on a seasonal basis.

The conservation measures to be implemented will be designed for specific sites. They may include planting vegetation, installing water bars, filling holes, re-routing trails, maintaining trails, installing barriers, signing, and disseminating information through the personnel and literature.

Temporary restrictions may be in effect from a few days to a few years, depending on the extent of the damage and the nature of the conservation measures taken to rectify the situation.

Air Quality

6) Using a tiered system, impose lakebed use restrictions (via supplemental rules) that correlate with a decrease in air quality due to fugitive dust.

Discussion: Vehicle use on the lakebed can disturb the surface, which results in fugitive dust leaving the Management Area during high winds. As the population in the Victor Valley continues to grow, it is anticipated there will be a correlating demand to control fugitive dust. This action is designed to limit the amount of fugitive dust during wind storms, not the everyday dust generated by recreational activities.

Use restrictions will be imposed according to Chart 1 as follows:

Chart 1

Stage	Flag	Lakebed Restrictions
1	Green	No use restrictions.
2	Yellow	Maximum speed set at 35 mph, all vehicle types & all activities allowed.
3	Red	Maximum speed set at 20 mph, all vehicle types okay, no circle racing allowed.
4	Black	Lakebed closed to motorized vehicle use.

Please refer to section III-G, Monitoring, for details on how the various stages will be determined.

Implementation and enforcement of this action will require a coordinated effort among all the affected parties. Similar to the closure of the lakebed where wet or muddy, restricting use on the lakebed during windstorms will require the use of volunteers. The flags will be posted at the entrance and at several locations

around the lakebed. Information relative to the issue of fugitive dust and the restrictions will be included in brochures.

7) *Spray the primary road network with a dust control agent on a periodic basis to control fugitive dust.*

Discussion: The primary road network consists of approximately 16 miles of dirt roads. These roads receive heavy use by primary vehicles within the Management Area. Treating these roads with a dust control agent will: 1) greatly reduce the amount of fugitive dust during wind storms, 2) reduce soil erosion, 3) increase safety on the roads, and 4) increase the overall visual quality of the area.

Noise Standards

8) *Manage the ambient sound level within the Management Area to limit excessive noise from a single source (craft or activity).*

Discussion: All motorized vehicles operating within the boundaries shall be required to be equipped with a muffler and spark arrester (in accordance with the California Vehicle Code). Within the Management Area, motorized vehicles suspected of exceeding state noise standards will be tested with a decibel meter.

Permitted events that generate a large volume of noise will be restricted to operation during daylight hours. Vehicles in permitted events may be given a waiver for compliance with state standards.

Cultural Resource Protection

9) *Identify, through inventory, potentially significant historic and prehistoric sites within the Management Area, and initiate Section 106 consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).*

Discussion: As mandated by the National Historic Preservation Act, the BLM is responsible for identification and management of cultural resources within the Management Area (Section 110). A stratified random inventory (class II survey) will be conducted on approximately 10% of the representative land forms within the Management Area. This representative sample will form the data base which will enable the management staff to determine future inventory requirements for the Management Area.

Private lands will be inventoried for cultural resource values as they are acquired. Site specific inventories will be completed prior to the construction of individual facilities within the Management Area, or the scarification of roads in the zone of

influence. A determination of eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) will be made on all identified sites (Section 106). The SHPO will be consulted for concurrence on site eligibility determination and mitigation of potential impacts.

10) Mitigate potential damage to significant cultural sites through protection and interpretation, to the maximum extent possible.

Discussion: The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area has been receiving intensive recreation use for over fifty years. As a result of this extensive use, it is theorized that any potential cultural sites have been heavily vandalized, or impacted by OHV play. Initial field surveys support this theory. Cultural resources that retain sufficient integrity (and are determined to be significant) will be protected and interpreted to explain the history of human activity that occurred within and adjacent to the Management Area.

The California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) was afforded an opportunity to comment on the draft El Mirage Management Plan. The SHPO selected not to comment within 30 calendar days of receipt of the document. Pursuant to the Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement in effect between the BLM and the SHPO, the BLM assumes the SHPO concurs with the adequacy of the Management Plan.

11) Contact local Native American groups regarding the contemporary significance and/or use of lands within the Management Area.

Discussion: Native Americans are known to have lived and/or utilized the natural resources present within the region encompassed by the Management Area. Consultation will be initiated with Native American representatives.

Wildlife

12) Promote and enhance opportunities for observing wildlife within the Management Area through the use of interpretive materials, by managing the vegetation, and by providing law enforcement.

Discussion: An interpretive program will be developed to educate visitors about the wildlife that inhabits the Management Area, including habitat and food requirements and their role in the ecosystem.

The purpose of protecting and planting vegetation in popular camping and staging areas is twofold. First, it will maintain food and cover for wildlife. Second, it will maintain the

attractiveness of the area for camping and staging. Such areas of concentrated use will thus remain in specific localized areas, and will not begin to develop throughout the entire Management Area.

Rangers will enforce all laws relative to the protection of native vegetation and wildlife. Hunting and shooting will be prohibited within the Management Area.

13) Re-condition and maintain two existing guzzlers within the affected environment and construct several (at least 3) additional guzzlers through the efforts of volunteers in the Cooperating Association.

Discussion: The two existing guzzlers were constructed by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) to enhance the habitat for wildlife. The guzzlers have since been vandalized and are in need of repair. The locations of the new guzzlers will be scattered within the Shadow Mountains. They will be located in remote and rocky canyons that are inaccessible by vehicles.

Combined, the guzzlers will increase the water available for wildlife such as fox, coyote, chukar, owl, red tail hawk, and other small animals. Barriers and signs will be installed around them to ensure vehicles are not driven near them.

14 & 15) Comply with the stipulations contained within the Formal Consultation memorandum for the desert tortoise from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service dated June 25, 1990 (Appendix E).

Discussion: On December 14, 1989, the BLM submitted a memorandum to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding a "Request for Initiating Formal Section 7 Consultation Concerning the Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area." On June 25, 1990, the BLM received a memorandum from the USFWS that contained the "Formal Consultation on the Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area."

The action items (Numbers 14 and 15) and the subsequent discussions that were contained in the draft Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area (March 1990) have been changed to reflect the contents of the Biological Opinion contained in the Formal Consultation memorandum dated June 25, 1990.

The Formal Consultation is divided into sections entitled Biological Opinion, Project Description, Effect of the Proposed Project on the Listed Species, Cumulative Effects, Incidental Take (including Reasonable and Prudent Measures and Terms and Conditions), and Conservation Recommendations. The entire Formal Consultation memorandum (18pp) is included as Appendix E of the Management Plan. The following discussion summarizes contents of the Formal Consultation.

The Biological Opinion states that the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the desert tortoise.

The Project Description, Effect of the Proposed Project on the Listed Species, and Cumulative Impact sections contain detailed descriptions of the Management Area and the resultant effects on the desert tortoise from developing the Management Area as prescribed in the Management Plan.

The level of Incidental Take anticipated by the USFWS for the Management Area is a total of 25 tortoises for each of the first five years and a total of 3 tortoises per year thereafter. In addition, there would be a take of approximately 16,360 acres of tortoise habitat (already in various stages of deteriorating condition) as a result of authorized OHV use within the boundary of the Management Area.

The Formal Consultation states that three Reasonable and Prudent Measures are necessary and appropriate to minimize the incidental take authorized by the Biological Opinion. These measures address:

(a) Minimizing the take of individual tortoises within the Management Area through education, regular Ranger patrols, selective tortoise-proof fencing, site specific surveys and planning during construction of facilities, and other management programs instituted by the BLM e.g. monitoring.

(b) Limiting the take of tortoise habitat within the Management Area to authorized recreation uses and the construction of the management facilities noted in the BLM's request for formal consultation.

(c) Reducing the take of individual tortoises and tortoise habitat within the zone of influence.

To comply with the above Reasonable and Prudent Measures, the BLM must abide by the Terms and Conditions contained within the Biological Opinion. These Terms and Conditions are designed to assure compliance with each of the aforementioned Reasonable and Prudent Measures. They are summarized as follows:

(a) Limiting of the take of individual tortoises to accidental and incidental morality or injury by authorized recreational activities within the boundary of the Management Area, surveying sites prior to construction, collecting tortoises within construction areas, installing tortoise proof fencing where appropriate and moving tortoises in this vicinity outside of the Management Area, establishing with the USFWS and the CDFG pre-approved locations for removal of tortoises from the Management Area, removing tortoises from the Management Area in a specific humane manner, providing the

USFWS and CDFG with an annual report addressing the number of tortoises found within the Management Area in the previous year, getting prior approval for any non-BLM employees that need to handle tortoises, using established protocols for handling, developing educational materials that are reviewed with the USFWS and CDFG, and patrolling land to ensure compliance with laws and regulations relative to unauthorized uses and to ensure compliance with Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act.

(b) Contacting the USFWS and CDFG regarding any activities not contained in the BLM's request for consultation to determine whether the proposed activity is covered by the Biological Opinion dated June 25, 1990.

(c) Limiting access within the zone of influence, patrolling the zone of influence to ensure compliance with laws and regulations relative to unauthorized uses and to ensure compliance with Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act, providing $10,000 for rehabilitation of routes within the zone of influence in the short term, providing $50,000 for road rehabilitation in the three years following completion of the Management Area's boundary fence, coordinating with USFWS and CDFG regarding specific road scarification techniques, monitoring the success of the road rehabilitation, and notifying the USFWS immediately if the Incidental Take authorized by the Biological Opinion is met.

The Biological Opinion also contained several Conservation Recommendations which address the broad view of the BLM's actions in the Mojave Desert relative to impacts to the desert tortoise. The USFWS recommended that BLM pursue a Desert Plan amendment to enable it to consolidate public land in the area between the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area and Edwards Air Force Base, close and rehabilitate routes in this same area and develop a small leaflet or poster on the tortoise and the BLM's tortoise management programs for distribution in the El Mirage Area.

16) Conduct an extensive random stratified inventory within the Management Area to determine if the Mohave ground squirrel is present, and if so, where and in what densities.

Discussion: The Management Area contains lands that are identified as the historic home range for the Mohave ground squirrel, a State-listed threatened species. The BLM has "conferred" with the CDFG, and actions numbers 16 and 17 reflect the results of this dialogue.

A possibility of two scenarios will exist as a result of the above action. Either:

(a) There are no Mohave ground squirrels within the Management Area, or
(b) There are Mohave ground squirrels present.

If no Mohave ground squirrels are located within the Management Area then information relative to this species will be contained in the literature, and no further action will be taken. However, if a population of the Mohave ground squirrels is located within the Management Area, then management action 17 will be implemented.

17) Intensively inventory, monitor, and take the appropriate actions to maintain populations of Mohave ground squirrel identified within the Management Area.

Discussion: Intensive inventories will be conducted, under contract, to determine the actual extent of any identified populations. This inventory may be piggy-backed upon the extensive inventory identified in action 16.

A monitoring program to determine trend will be developed contingent upon locating a viable population of Mohave ground squirrels. Such a monitoring program will be developed with input from CDFG.

If an existing population within the Management Area exhibits a downward trend, the impacts will be mitigated by one or more of the following measures:
(a) Modify the perimeter boundaries.
(b) Construct exclosures around specific populations.
(c) Impose seasonal visitor use restrictions for portions of the Management Area.
(d) Restrict OHV use to designated roads and trails within a portion of the Management Area.
(e) Trap and relocate identified populations.
(f) Place emphasis on protecting squirrels in the written and interpretive material distributed to visitors.

Soil Management

18) Establish a monitoring system to determine the approximate amount of soil loss from different soils within the Management Area. After monitoring for five consecutive years, a baseline will be established for an acceptable level of on site soil loss.

Discussion: The various soil types within the Management Area have been mapped and classified according to type and erosion factor. The current level of soil loss is unknown. This action will monitor the various soil types in an attempt to quantify the approximate loss by year.

Five years of monitoring will provide adequate data from which to establish a baseline level of on site soil loss. The baseline will be used in a comparison with the soil loss for any given year to detect increases, or decreases, in soil loss as visitor use levels fluctuate.

19) Implement conservation repair measures as necessary within the Management Area and the zone of influence for the prevention of excessive erosion, and for making repairs to the soil where damage is unacceptable.

Discussion: Conservation measures will be implemented where erosion and soil loss are observed and obvious, prior to establishing a baseline soil loss standard. After the standard is established, conservation measures will be implemented where necessary according to data generated from the monitoring program. In the zone of influence closed roads and trails may be rehabilitated to reverse soil compaction, to reduce their visibility and to speed up the process by which they return to a pre-disturbed state.

Conservation repair measures may include the following:
(a) Rerouting trails.
(b) Maintaining trails.
(c) Hardening trails and roads.
(d) Scarifying trails and roads.
(e) Installing water bars along routes of travel.
(f) Planting vegetation.
(g) Installing barriers.
(h) Imposing temporary use restrictions (area & trail).
(i) Imposing speed limits.
(j) Providing visitor education and enforcement.

E. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Roads

1) Pave the main entrance road from El Mirage Road to the location of the headquarters complex.

Discussion: This is the main access road leading into the Management Area, and has been used as such since 1985 (Illustration 8). The portion to be paved is approximately 2.5 miles in length and accesses the most popular camping and staging areas. Use will be restricted to street legal vehicles.

2) Maintain Mountain View Road, Twin Hills Road, and Lake Road as graded dirt roads.

Discussion: These are primary roads and will serve as the main access net within the Management Area. These roads will be maintained on a regular basis. All types of vehicles will be allowed to use these roads.

Mountain View Road will have both paved and unpaved sections. It will be paved for two miles north from El Mirage Road to Desert Flower Road. From here it will be a maintained dirt road for an additional three miles north to where it connects with Twin Hills Road.

Twin Hills Road is a connector road between Mountain View Road and the east entrance to the Management Area. This will be a maintained dirt road for five miles within the Management Area.

Lake Road is an existing bypass road around the north side of the lakebed that will be improved. The first 1/2 mile from Mountain View Road west to the entrance of the headquarters complex will be paved, the remainder will be maintained as a dirt road.

3) Improve and maintain a system of secondary access routes branching off from the main access roads into the heavy use and popular camping areas.

Discussion: These routes will be maintained to allow access by primary vehicles into the most popular camping and staging areas. These routes will be identified and maintained at the discretion of the Project Manager. A current network of roads put in by private developers will form the core of this route system.

These routes will be maintained approximately 14 feet wide and for a speed limit of 15 MPH. This system will expand with time as the Management Area receives additional use.

Traffic Control

4) Implement speed limits on primary roads and secondary routes throughout the Management Area.

Discussion: Speed limits are necessary to control use and maintain a safe environment. The following speed limits will be posted:

(a)	50 MPH	Paved section of Mountain View Road to within 300' of the entrance.
(b)	35 MPH	Mountain View Road, 100' from the entrance station to the intersection with Twin Hills Road.
(c)	35 MPH	Lake Road, entire road.
(d)	35 MPH	Twin Hills Road, entire road.
(e)	15 MPH	Within 100' of entrance station.
(f)	15 MPH	In popular staging & camping areas.

A speed limit of 15 MPH will be in effect on all secondary access routes leading into the primary staging areas. All speed limits will be reviewed on a regular basis to determine appropriateness.

5) *Install barriers along the primary access roads where necessary to ensure smooth traffic flow, to limit OHV cross-traffic, and to enhance OHV rider safety.*

Discussion: Installing barriers may prove necessary along the paved portion of Mountain View Road, and some segments of the other primary access roads, to limit the amount of OHV cross traffic. The barriers may also be necessary near heavily used staging areas to prevent young OHV riders from accidentally straying out on roads. Where barriers are installed, controlled intersections will be created to allow cross-traffic.

Perimeter Barrier

6) *Construct a permanent barrier around the perimeter of the Management Area, with all openings controlled.*

Discussion: Two types of barriers (wire rope & smooth wire) have been identified for use, depending on the need and the terrain. The wire rope barrier will be constructed with three strands of 3/8 to 5/8 inch wire rope strung on posts of either railroad ties, telephone poles, or well casing. The smooth wire fence will have three to five strands of smooth wire supported by metal T-posts.

The wire rope barrier will be installed around the southern boundary where the Management Area shares a border with the community of El Mirage. In this area there is a need to construct a barrier that will physically contain use. Along the eastern, northern, and western boundary the primary purpose of the barrier is to identify the boundaries.

The final determination on the type of barrier will be based upon the availability of material, and/or the use of volunteers or contractors. The final design will also depend upon the need (if any) to mitigate potential impacts to wildlife. The entire perimeter barrier will be appropriately marked with reflective material. Gates will be strategically located in the barrier to allow access for emergency vehicles (Illustration 8).

Entrance Stations

7) *Construct a permanent entrance station on Mountain View Road.*

Discussion: Year-round access will be through the main entrance station on Mountain View Road. The entrance station will be open 24 hours per day. Voluntary fee collection materials will be available for when the station is not staffed. The building will

likely be pre-fabricated and will have the following capabilities:
(a) 110V power and restroom capability.
(b) Lights, air conditioning, heating.
(c) Telephone and radio.
(d) Cash register.
(e) Flagpole.

The entrance station and visitor contact station will both have pay phones available for public use to ensure visitors the opportunity to report emergencies.

8) Acquire two portable fee collection buildings for use at the east and west entrance stations, and develop a site at the east and west entrances for the buildings.

Discussion: The east and west entrances will be open only during key holiday weekends, at which time portable fee collection buildings will be located at these entrances. The site for the portable entrance stations will be developed to include power and a level pad to park the building.

Restrooms

9) Construct restrooms within the Management Area.

Discussion: Restrooms are necessary due to the high amount of day use and the large number of visitors who use the area but do not have self-contained recreational vehicles. The restrooms will be located where the majority of visitors have historically camped.

The restrooms will be self-contained vault toilets, preferably the waterless type where regular pumping is not required. The design of the restrooms will allow for future expansion with the addition of stalls to the existing structure. Initially, restrooms will be installed at the following locations (Illustration 8) and will have the following capacity:

#1 Main entrance..... 6 stalls
#2 Site of the Hess Ranch..... 4 stalls
#3 Bella Vista Road..... 4 stalls
#4 Sailors Bay on the lakebed.... 4 stalls
#5 Twin Hills..... 4 stalls

Headquarters Complex

10) Develop a series of buildings and facilities at a central location for use as a headquarters complex.

Discussion: See Illustration 8 for location of the headquarters. The headquarters complex will contain the following facilities:
(a) First aid/visitor contact station.
(b) Maintenance shop.
(c) Vehicle storage building.

(d) Office building.
(e) Heliport.
(f) Visitor & employee parking.
(g) Water reservoir.
(h) Fuel storage.

These are the facilities required to manage visitor use, provide visitor services, and house the staff of the Management Area. Not all of the above facilities are identified as specific items within the implementation table. The engineering and architectural design for the entire headquarters complex will be completed at one time. Such facilities as the office building, maintenance shop, and fuel storage will be constructed first. Other facilities will be constructed when either: 1) funds become available, 2) Management Area staff have the time during slow use periods, and/or 3) volunteer time and money are available.

All the facilities at the headquarters complex will be located in one compound to simplify maintenance, to provide a centralized work environment, and to enhance security of government property. Secure parking will be provided for employee vehicles.

A main office building will be constructed to provide working space for the staff of the Management Area. This building will include separate restroom facilities for males and females that are equipped with showers and lockers. This will facilitate the staff needs for personal hygiene when doing physical labor in the field or when patrolling on OHVs during the summer.

Options will be explored for a visitor contact station. The options under consideration include a prefabricated building, a mobile trailer, or the renovation of an existing building. First aid and visitor information will be provided at the visitor contact station, with the heliport serving as an evacuation point for seriously injured visitors. Parking will be provided for visitors driving OHVs or regular vehicles.

A maintenance shop will be constructed to provide working space for light maintenance of vehicles and equipment. The vehicles and equipment will be stored inside to protect them from the weather and vandalism.

The water reservoir will be available for filling water trucks used to repair damaged portions of the lakebed. Pre-positioning water in a storage reservoir will allow several trucks to be filled in a short period of time. This will also provide a water source for fire suppression efforts. To the extent possible, an existing reservoir at the site of the headquarters will be used.

Fuel storage will be developed to fill vehicles and equipment on site. This reduces employee exposure to the safety hazard of carrying fuel in cans back and forth from a service station. It

also saves considerable work time which would otherwise be lost. The nearest service station that accepts a government credit card is thirty minutes away.

Communications

11) Develop a radio system that will facilitate two-way communication among all field personnel, the headquarters, the entrance stations, and the dispatching facilities at the Interagency Communication Center.

Discussion: The radios will have multiple frequencies with the capability to contact the Interagency Communication Center and other agency field units. The initial design for the radio system includes a low power repeater for use within the Management Area, a base radio at the headquarters, radios in all the vehicles, a radio at the entrance, and a cache of hand held radios for field personnel.

F. MAINTENANCE

Facilities

1) Maintain facilities as needed to ensure they are always functional and in good condition.

Discussion: Facilities will be designed primarily for the ability to function with a minimum of maintenance. Facilities will be maintained by Management Area personnel unless a particular task is beyond the staff's ability, or other arrangements have been made (e.g. volunteers).

The restrooms will be pumped at least once a year, if they are not the waterless type. Lime, or a similar odor retardant, will be added to the restrooms on a regular basis to reduce the odor. Trash generated at the headquarters complex will be hauled to the county dump on a weekly basis by personnel assigned to the Management Area.

A sandblaster will be utilized for removing graffiti from the buildings and natural features of the landscape (rocks).

Materials will be stored at the headquarters complex for repairs on the Management Area barriers. The signs and material designed to make motorist aware of the perimeter barrier will be maintained as part of the barrier. Damage to a barrier will be repaired in a timely fashion by either:
(a) The offender.
(b) Volunteers.
(c) Personnel from the Management Area.

2) Maintain the primary road network inside the Management Area, including the access roads on a regular basis.

Discussion: Primary roads (non-paved) will be maintained through a private contract or by San Bernardino County. These roads will be graded regularly. Between gradings the Management Area tractor will be used to make minor repairs to these roads as needed. The paved portion of Mountain View Road will also be maintained through a private contract or by San Bernardino County.

The primary access roads (non-paved) will be maintained to the following specifications:

(a) The roads will be approximately 28 feet wide and will accommodate two way traffic.
(b) Berms will be kept to a minimum on both sides of the roads.
(c) All rocks and dirt clods larger than two inches will be removed from the road surface.
(d) The roads will have a center crown, grade permitting.
(e) Culverts will be installed, and fill material or turf blocks will be used to stabilize a road base wherever needed.
(f) Roads will be maintained in a condition that will allow vehicles to travel at approximately 35 MPH.

3) Maintain secondary access routes and trails on a limited basis.

Discussion: Secondary access routes into heavily used camping areas will be maintained by Management Area personnel in a condition that will allow their use by primary vehicles. These routes may be only one vehicle width, and will be maintained for approximately a 15 MPH speed limit. Turnouts will be provided.

A network of existing OHV trails will be maintained on a limited basis. Trails will be identified for maintenance in the following situations:

(a) Proliferation of new trails around a section of trail damaged or covered with very large whoop-de-dos.
(b) Popular trails located in or adjacent to heavily used camping areas where the speed limit is 15 MPH.
(c) Strategic trails that are located in a pass or a narrow section of the Management Area where a limited number of alternative routes exist.
(d) Existing large wide trails that serve as key routes of travel for OHVs throughout the Management Area.
(e) Trails located on sensitive soils.

Select routes and trails must be maintained to ensure visitors access into and throughout the Management Area. The Management Area tractor is not designed or equipped to maintain the primary roads. It will be capable of maintaining some of the secondary

routes which do not require as much work. Some trail maintenance will require the use of other types of equipment, which will either be borrowed or rented on an as needed basis.

Trails that are maintained will allow the average rider to use them. The majority of trails will not be maintained to create the widest possible variety of riding experiences.

Communications

4) Maintain the communication network for continuous operation on a 24 hour basis.

Discussion The Management Area radios will be maintained under contract to a private vendor.

Hazard Reduction

5) Remove all nonnatural installations where possible and mitigate the hazardous effects of others.

Discussion: The known list of such installations includes:

	Installation	Location
(a)	Cement culvert	T.6N., R.6W., SW1/4 Sec. 8
(b)	Steel post	T.6N., R.6W., W1/2 Sec. 8
(c)	Rocks set in cement	T.6N., R.6W., W1/2 Sec. 8
(d)	Cement foundation	T.6N., R.6W., N1/2 Sec. 7
(e)	Cement foundation	T.6N., R.7W., S1/2 Sec. 3
(f)	Cement foundation	T.6N., R.7W., S1/2 Sec. 4
(g)	Well shafts	Various
(h)	Mine shafts	Various

Abandoned mine shafts and open wells within the Management Area will either be filled or fenced.

Off-highway vehicle "worm track" courses will be allowed to develop and remain in the immediate vicinity of popular camping and staging areas where the prima-facia speed limit is 15 MPH. All other such courses will be obliterated to reduce the chance of an accident occurring.

G. MONITORING

Recreation Activities

1) Monitor the recreation setting within the Management Area to ensure the quality of the recreation experience is meeting visitor needs.

Discussion: The level and type of services that will be provided are intended to assure continuance of high quality recreational experiences for the next ten years. An assumption was made that during this time the Management Area could provide recreation opportunities for approximately 300,000 visitor use days (VUDs) per year. After this point there would be unacceptable levels of conflicts among the various activities. An assumption was also made that use would occur in a pattern similar to present use (i.e., 20% of all use in May, 45% of use occurring on Sunday).

Monitoring data will be collected from the following sources:
(a) Visitor counts taken at the entrance stations.
(b) Accident reports.
(c) Violation notices, both warnings and citations.
(d) Incident reports.
(e) Patrol logs.
(f) Permit compliance checks.
(g) Aerial photographs.
(h) Correspondence with individuals and groups.
(i) Visitor surveys.

Data will be assimilated each August for the preceding year as follows:
(a) Visitor counts will be broken down into use counts for the following totals:
    -- Total annual use
    -- Seasonal use
    -- Weekend use
    -- Weekend day use
    -- Holiday use
    -- Week day use
(b) Accident reports will be broken down into injury, non-injury, and fatal categories.
(c) Incidents reported in violation notices, incident reports, correspondences, and patrol logs will be compiled into one of the following categories:
    1. Violations.
    2. Accidents.
    3. Conflicts between activities.
    4. Destruction of natural resources.

Monitoring data will be analyzed to detect patterns and associated impacts. Results will be used as feedback for making adjustments in the affected areas (i.e., signing, interpretive programs, brochures, patrols, etc.) as necessary.

The monitoring program is designed to detect deterioration of the quality of the recreation experience. When either the target use level is reached and/or the recreation experience deteriorates, the Management Plan will be re-examined to determine if the management actions need to be modified. Such modifications will likely include:
(a) Appropriateness of zoning use on the lakebed.
(b) Number and type of personnel.
(c) Number and type of facilities.

(d) Possible expansion of the Management Area.
(e) Restrictions of specific activities.

2) Monitor both public and private land within the zone of influence to ensure that the management actions in this plan are resolving the recreation related issues.

Discussion: Monitoring both within and around the Management Area will be an on-going effort to make sure the following issues are being satisfactorily resolved:
(a) Trespass on private property is kept to a minimum.
(b) Littering and trash accumulation are kept to a minimum.
(c) Sewage is disposed of properly.
(d) Route proliferation and adverse OHV use patterns are controlled.

Monitoring data will be compiled from the same sources as in action 1 above.

Natural Resources

3) Monitor the lakebed for changes in size, invasion of vegetation, and the development of cracks, holes, or depressions.

Discussion: The size and condition of the lakebed will be monitored with routine patrols and aerial photographs taken every two years. Holes, depressions, cracks, vegetation, and mounds will be plotted on topographic maps, and then confirmed through field inspections. The appropriate mitigation steps will then be taken to ensure both the integrity and the historic size of the lakebed surface.

4) Monitor vegetation within the Management Area to detect changes in cover, and to observe changes in the population of Joshua trees.

Discussion: Sudden or dramatic change in vegetative cover will alter visitor patterns, affect erosion and water runoff, and change the recreational experience. Initially, monitoring will consist of examining successive aerial photos and field observations of cover patterns. If necessary, photo or ring plots will be established for more accurate measurements.

Areas experiencing changes in vegetation will be analyzed in conjunction with soil type to determine if the area in question is capable of tolerating such use. The appropriate mitigation measures will then be taken to make certain that vegetative cover is maintained.

5) *Monitor and classify the air quality around the lakebed to determine the appropriate management actions to be taken relative to the amount of fugitive dust.*

Discussion: A series of 36" diameter "visibility" disks will be installed at three points along the perimeter for use in monitoring visibility during wind storms. During wind storms the visibility disks will be monitored regularly and the results classified according to Chart 2. Stages 2, 3, and 4 require specific management actions to be placed into effect (section III-D, Air Quality).

The air quality will be classified according to Chart 2 as follows:

Chart 2

Stage	Classification	Wind	Visibility	Dust clouds
1	Minor dust	>20mph	< 200'	few, small
2	Moderate dust	>25mph	< 100'	few, moderate
3	Major dust	>30mph	< 50'	large clouds
4	Critical dust	>35mph	< 25'	total dust

Definition of variables:

Wind..... Average wind speed excluding gusts.
Visibility... Relative visibility within the Management Area determined at monitoring stations.
Dust clouds.. Another form of classification for the size of the dust cloud, this may vary from one or two individual dust devils to one large dust cloud.

H. ADMINISTRATION

Management Responsibilities

1) *Manage the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area as a joint venture among the Bureau of Land Management, the State Department of Parks and Recreation, the OHMVR Commission, and the counties of San Bernardino and Los Angeles.*

Discussion: The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area is a joint venture among five parties. The Interagency Agreement signed in November 1988 defines the roles of each party. A summary of the roles each party will play in the development and management of the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area are shown in Chart 3.

Chart 3

Party	Role
Bureau of Land Management	* Function as lead agency. * Prepare Management Plan. * Make approximately 12,000 acres of public land available to the Management Area. * Apply for OHV grants and distribute monies to cooperating agencies as mutually agreed upon. * Provide funding for permitting and compliance of mineral, grazing, and commercial filming activities with Bureau appropriated funds.
State of California & OHMVR Commission	* Provide funding for activities related to OHV use in the El Mirage Management Area and surrounding zone of influence.
San Bernardino County	* Serve as acquisition agent for the Management Area. * Serve as facility development and construction agent for the Management Area. * Continue to maintain county roads. * Continue to enforce state and county laws. * Delegate authority to BLM Rangers to enforce state and county laws related to OHV use. * Apply for monies that might be available to benefit the Management Area.
Los Angeles County	* Continue to maintain county roads. * Continue to enforce state and county laws. * Apply for monies that might be available to benefit the Management Area. * Provide avenues for public advertisement of the Management Area and education of visitors.

Staffing

2) Hire a staff consisting of full time and part time personnel to operate the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area.

Discussion: The positions required to implement the actions contained in the Management Plan area as follows: Project Manager (1), Administrative Technician (1), Outdoor Recreation Planner (1), Law Enforcement Rangers (3), Emergency Medical Technicians (3), Maintenance Worker (1), and Fee Collection Personnel (3).

A staffing plan for the Management Area is on file in the Barstow Resource Area Office (approved August 12, 1988). The staffing plan contains a complete description of the roles, responsibilities, and tour of duties for each position.

The Project Manager and Outdoor Recreation Planner will directly interface with San Bernardino County personnel regarding land acquisition and facility development. The Supervisory Ranger will work directly with members of the County's Sheriff Reserve when assistance in law enforcement is required.

Upon completion, the Management Area headquarters complex will serve as the official duty station for the BLM staff. All personnel, vehicles, and equipment will be located at the headquarters. Space will be allocated at the headquarters complex for use by members of the Cooperating Association.

IV. COST ESTIMATES AND IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

A. COST ESTIMATES

The implementation schedule reflects the approximate cost and the sequence for development that will occur during the first five years of Management Plan implementation. This includes the initial outlay for facilities development and major pieces of equipment. The majority of funds will go toward land acquisition. At the end of this five year period, the majority of land identified for acquisition will have been acquired. The parcels of land within the inholding will be acquired over the next five years, years 6-10.

The county of San Bernardino will function as acquisition and development agent for the Management Area. Salaries for County employees involved with acquisition or development are included in the dollar amounts. The total amount of money required for land acquisition will be dependent upon the final appraisals for the private land to be acquired.

The costs for development of the infrastructure are estimates. These figures will be refined upon completion of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) that establishes the procedures and details for San Bernardino County to function as the development agent. The Management Area will be fully operational and staffed after the third year, 1992. Following this year, the fourth and fifth years will see a leveling off in development costs. The fifth year costs represents a custodial level of funding. This is the approximate amount of money that will be required for the ongoing daily operation and maintenance of the Management Area.

The custodial costs for daily operations and maintenance will be offset by a variety of sources of income. Funds will be collected from entrance fees, special recreation permits, and land use permits. Additional sources of funds will include money obtained through other grants, BLM appropriated funds, special assessment fees for commercial activities that require permit compliance checks, funds collected through the courts for acts of vandalism, donations, and the use of volunteer efforts.

B. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The following schedule represents the cost estimates by year associated with implementation of the Management Plan. Please reference the key following the schedule for a definition of terms and abbreviations.

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS		COST BY YEAR FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	WM	COST
LAND TENURE ADJUSTMENT								
1. Land acquisition	WM	—	--	—	—	—		
	PROC	$2.452	$1.750	$1.750	$1.750	$1.750		$9.452
2. Route designation	WM	4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	8.0	
	PROC	—	—	—	—	—		$0
3. Mineral Withdrawals	WM	--	0.5	--	--	—	0.5	
	PROC	—	—	—	—	—		$0
USE PERMITS								
SRPs and LUPs	WM	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	5.0	
	PROC	—	—	—	—	—		$0
VISITOR MANAGEMENT								
1. Provide L.E. services	WM	18.0	18.0	18.0	22.5	16.5	93.0	
	PROC	$7,300	*	*	*	*		$7,300
2. Provide EMT services	WM	7.0	11.0	19.0	20.0	20.0	77.0	
	PROC	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000		$10,000
3. Collect entry fees	WM	—	--	20.0	20.0	20.0	60.0	
	PROC	—	—	*	*	*		$0
4. Support services	WM	7.0	6.0	4.0	2.0	2.0	21.0	
	PROC	—	—	—	—	—		$0
5. Signs	WM	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	10.0	
	PROC	$10,000	$15,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000		$55,000
6. Visitor contact station	WM	—	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	12.0	
	PROC	—	$15,000	$20,000	—	—		$35,000
7. 24 hour message phone	WM	—	—	—	—	—	0.0	
	PROC	—	—	$200	—	—		$200
8. Develop area brochure	WM	1.0	2.0	--	0.5	—	3.5	
	PROC	$200	$200	—	$200	—		$600
9. Develop interp brochure	WM	—	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.5	4.5	
	PROC	—	$200	$200	—	$200		$600
10. Print brochures	WM	1.0	2.0	--	1.0	—	4.0	
	PROC	$4,800	$9,600	—	$9,800	—		$24,200
11. Develop cultural resource	WM	—	1.0	1.0	—	—	2.0	
	PROC	—	*	*	—	—		$0
12. Volunteer program	WM	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	5.0	
	PROC	$800	$800	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000		$4,600

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS	COST BY YEAR	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	WM	COST
RESOURCE PROTECTION								
1. Close lakebed when wet	WM	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	15.0	
	PROC	—	—	—	—	—		$0
2. Fence east end of lk bed	WM	—	—	2.0	—	—	2.0	
	PROC	—	—	*	—	—		$0
3. Maintain lk bed surface	WM	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	5.0	
	PROC	*	*	*	*	*		$0
4. Vegetation management	WM	—	4.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	12.0	
	PROC	—	*	*	*	*		$0
5. Cultural inventory	WM	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	—	6.0	
	PROC	—	—	—	—	—		$0
6. Manage cultural sites	WM	—	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	8.5	
	PROC	—	*	*	*	*		$0
7. Wildlife management	WM	8.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	24.0	
	PROC	$45,000	*	*	*	*		$45,000
8. Soil management	WM	—	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	4.0	
	PROC	—	$3,000	—	$3,000	—		$6,000
INFRASTRUCTURE								
1. Perimeter barrier	WM	1.0	1.0	—	—	—	2.0	
	PROC	$23,500	$191,000	—	—	—		$214,500
2. Restrooms	WM	1.0	1.0	1.0	—	—	3.0	
	PROC	$15,000	$45,000	$15,000	—	—		$75,000
3. Main entrance station	WM	—	1.0	—	—	—	1.0	
	PROC	—	$20,000	—	—	—		$20,000
4. East & west entrance stations	WM	—	—	1.0	—	—	1.0	
	PROC	—	—	$35,000	—	—		$35,000
5. Headquarters Complex	WM	2.0	4.0	—	—	—	6.0	
	PROC	—	$150,000	—	—	—		$150,000
6. Visitor contact station	WM	—	—	10.0	—	—	10.0	
	PROC	—	—	$20,000	—	—		$20,000
7. Pave entrance road	WM	2.0	—	—	—	—	2.0	
	PROC	$500,000	—	—	—	—		$500,000
8. Improve Lake Rd.	WM	—	1.0	—	—	—	1.0	
	PROC	—	$60,500	—	—	—		$60,500
9. Improve Twin Hills Rd.	WM	—	—	1.0	—	—	1.0	
	PROC	—	—	$50,000	—	—		$50,000
10. Communication System	WM	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	3.0	
	PROC	$1,200	$1,250	$2,000	—	—		$4,450
11. Hazard Reduction	WM	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	5.0	
	PROC	*	*	*	*	*		$0
12. Facility Planning	WM	6.0	—	—	—	—	6.0	
	PROC	$74,000	—	—	—	—		$74,000

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS		COST BY YEAR FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	WM	COST
MAINTENANCE								
1. Barriers	WM	—	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	4.0	
	PROC	—	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000		$4,000
2. Restrooms	WM	—	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.5	
	PROC	—	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000		$4,000
3. Entry station	WM	—	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.5	
	PROC	—	*	*	*	*		$0
4. Headquarters complex	WM	—	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	16.0	
	PROC	—	$1,500	$7,000	$6,000	$6,000		$20,500
5. Road grading	WM	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	5.0	
	PROC	$25,000	$25,000	$32,000	$32,000	$32,000		$146,000
6. Paved road	WM	—	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.0	
	PROC	—	$18,000	$18,000	$18,000	$18,000		$72,000
7. Routes of travel	WM	—	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	4.0	
	PROC	—	$500	$500	$500	$500		$2,000
8. Communication system	PROC	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000		$15,000
9. Tools & equipment	PROC	$6,150	$5,000	$5,000	$1,000	$1,000		$18,150
10. Supplies & materials	PROC	$5,000	$20,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000		$40,000
11. Equip repair & rental	PROC	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000		$20,000
MONITORING								
1. Recreation Use	WM	—	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	4.0	
	PROC	—	—	—	--	—		$0
2. Aerial Photos	WM	1.0	—	1.0	—	1.0	3.0	
	PROC	$7,000	—	$7,000	—	$7,000		$21,000
ADMINISTRATION								
1. Administer agreement	WM	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	4.0	
2. Establish MOU W/S.O.	WM	2.0	—	—	--	—	2.0	
3. Training	PROC	$2,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000		$14,000
4. Travel	PROC	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000		$15,000
5. Uniforms	PROC	$2,000	$1,500	$3,450	$2,000	$2,000		$10,950
6. Vehicles (milage & rental)	PROC	$11,200	$14,000	$14,000	$14,000	$14,000		$67,200
7. Office equip & supplies	PROC	$7,500	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000		$15,500
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT								
1. Vehicles	PROC	$49,800	$16,600	—	--	—		$66,400
2. Generator	PROC	$2,500	—	—	—	—		$2,500
3. Tractor	PROC	$35,000	—	$2,800	—	—		$37,800
4. Equip Replacement	PROC	—	—	$5,000	—	—		$5,000

Key to Implementation Schedule:

FY = Fiscal year. The federal government fiscal year begins October 1 and ends on September 30. A fiscal year is referenced by the year it terminates (e.g. FY 90 ends 9/30/90).

WM = Workmonth. The figures in the WM row represent the number of workmonths to accomplish a specific management action. A workmonth includes the costs associated with an employee such as salary, leave, and benefits. The 1990 average cost for a workmonth is $3,000. 10 workmonths equal 1 fiscal year.

PROC = Procurement. The figures in the procurement row represent actual dollar amounts, (with one exception) for projected costs associated with an action (not including workmonths). This includes such items as the cost of facilities, equipment, and services. The one exception is the first line of the implementation schedule; land acquisition. The figures for land acquisition represent millions of dollars (i.e. $1.750 = $1,750,000).

* This identifies actions which will incur incidental costs. The money for these costs is included within other actions.

Note: The dollar amounts in the implementation schedule represent the value in 1988 - 1989 dollars when the scoping work was completed. OHV Grant requests and BLM appropriations will reflect adjustments for inflation.

V. PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

A. LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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John Ogara	China Lake Naval Weapons Center Environmental Division
Ramesh Gpta	California Department of Transportation

Community Groups and Residents

El Mirage Improvement Association
El Mirage Fire Department
Hank Noble, Shadow Mountain Village
John Shaw, Shadow Mountain Village

Visitor Organizations

Representatives from the following organizations (including the aforementioned Community Groups and Residents) participated in the planning effort as members of the Workgroup:

California Off Road Vehicle Association
Lost Angeles Motorcycle Club
American Motorcyclist Association, District 37
California 4 Wheel Drive
Southern California Timing Association
United Gyrocopters Association
Jarick Corporation
United Mining Councils of America
American Landsailing Association
Sylmar Hang Gliding Association
Southern California Soaring Association
Port-A-Potti Pilots (radio controlled airplanes)
Film Permits Unlimited
Region 12 Soaring Council

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

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1. Background

The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area was developed with extensive public involvement throughout the entire planning process. Prior to developing the draft Management Plan, public scoping meetings were held over a period of 5 years to identify issues. Once the draft plan was completed parties affected by the proposed action were notified via press releases, a notice in the Federal Register, direct mailings, and public meetings.

The availability of the draft plan, the dates of the comment period, the dates of the public meetings, and the address where to request copies of the draft plan or send comments, were published as legal notices in the Federal Register, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Bernardino Sun*, the *Victorville Daily Press*. Official BLM press releases were distributed throughout southern California. Notice was sent to a variety of publications representing the various recreation interests including *In Gear, Dusty Times, Cycle News, CORVA, Thermal,* and *Wind Wizard Newsletter*. Notice was also sent to the following user groups: U.S. Hang Gliding Association, Pacific Landyacht Club, Sylmar Hang Gliding Association, Windsports International Inc., Southern California Timing Association, and the Southern California Soaring Association.

Availability of the draft plan was published in the El Mirage Improvement Association Newsletter. Notices were also sent to

landowners within the Management Area, organized recreation clubs, government agencies, and interested individuals. The notice to the landowners briefly explained the proposed action and included a map of the affected area. Furthermore, notices were given to visitors at the dry lakebed over the President's day weekend in 1990.

A mail list was developed for the draft Management Plan based on request from interested parties and individuals. The mail list also included persons who had previously contacted the BLM and expressed an interest in reviewing the draft plan. Copies of the draft plan were distributed March 16, 1990. The draft plan was also distributed at the public meetings.

Public comments concerning the draft Management Plan were formally received during a 45 day comment period from March 17 to April 30, 1990. Two public meetings were held and oral and written comments were received.

2. Response to Public Meeting Comments

The following is a review and response of the comments, questions, and concerns that were voiced at the public meetings. The first meeting was held at the Honda Rider Education Center in Colton, California on March 29, 1990 at 7 p.m. The second meeting was held at the El Mirage Community Center in El Mirage, California on March 31, 1990 at noon.

The first meeting was attended by approximately 70 people. About 45 of these people were landowners who expressed a variety of concerns regarding the acquisition program. The majority of these landowners were opposed to the idea. Most questioned the process for determining fair market value or did not feel there would be fair compensation. Approximately 15 people who attended the meeting were involved in landsailing and expressed concern over the management of the lakebed. They felt there was a need for stronger controls over the use of the lakebed (to segregate motorized and non-motorized uses). The remaining 10 people were representatives from user groups and spoke in favor of the project.

The second meeting was attended by approximately 150 people. Most all of these were landowners opposed to selling their land. Many of the landowners expressed anger at not being personally invited to be involved in the planning process. A few OHV enthusiasts attended the meeting and stated opposition to the perimeter barrier, entry fees, and the land closure proposed north of the Management Area.

Oral comments from the two meetings have been combined and are listed in sections that relate to the draft Management Plan. Several comments and questions were made concerning the process and

the project in general. The latter group of comments, not specific to the draft plan, are presented in the section titled general comments.

A breakdown of the oral comments is as follows:

A.	Acquisition and Designations Affecting Land Use	36	40%
B.	Authorized Activities	5	05%
C.	Visitor Management	21	23%
D.	Resource Protection and Management	2	02%
E.	Infrastructure Development	5	05%
F.	Maintenance	1	01%
G.	General Comments	22	24%
	Total	91	100%

The response to comments is based upon the tape recordings of the meetings. In many cases the same question or comment was made by several persons. Similar concerns have been grouped together wherever possible with one response. An asterisk (*) identifies a different speaker where comments have been combined.

Several of the same questions and concerns were raised numerous times in several different letters and/or the public meetings. In this situation, there is a cross-reference to the previous response.

A. ACQUISITION AND DESIGNATIONS AFFECTING LAND STATUS

Necessity for Land Acquisition

1. Is it that important to acquire all the land identified for acquisition?
2. To go into (acquire) the view lots in the Shadow Mountains is obscene.
3. I am concerned that acquired lands will be disposed later and developed for other uses.
4. In the future can landowners retain their land and lease it to make money?
5. If people do not sell their land at fair market value we won't have places that are protected for everybody to use.

Response to A-1: Several of the issues confronting recreation use in the El Mirage-Shadow Mountain area are a result of the present land status. Acquisition of private land and retention in federal ownership is the only sure method to guarantee the public long term access. If the land were not acquired, it would not be possible to predict the intentions of landowners 10, 20, or 50 years into the future. Opportunities for development on these lands would exist, and if the land were developed, there would be the potential for conflict with recreation activities in the Management Area.

Response to A–2: There are thousands of acres throughout the Antelope and Victor Valleys that have the same potential for being developed for view lots. There are no other locations in all of southern California which provide the public with the same multiple use recreation opportunities.

Response to A–3: This is a long term project designed to serve regional recreation needs for both today and future generations.

Response to A–4: Leases or agreements will not be sought with landowners.

Response to A–5: Comments noted.

Willingness to Sell

6. Being an absentee landowner does not mean we are not interested in the land. How was the question asked on the survey to determine if landowners were willing to sell?
7. I object to the concept. Landowners should be able to retain their land and sell it in the future. *I purchased land to retire on. *Let the visitors go to other public land. *I am glad to sell my land for such a beautiful project.
8. One of the advantages for the landowners who sell under this kind of program include tax deferral.
9. Why not purchase some land out in the desert for this project?
10. The land which our green sticker money is buying should only be bought where landowners want to sell.

Response to A–6: A feasibility study was prepared in the initial stages of planning to determine if the project was viable. As a part of the study, landowners were surveyed to determine their willingness to exchange or sell their land at fair market value, for the purpose of creating a managed recreation area in the El Mirage-Shadow Mountains area. A letter accompanied the survey to explain the scope of the project.

Of the approximately 1,100 landowners in the affected environment, 133 were randomly surveyed. This represents 12% of all landowners. There were 95 responses to the survey. The results of the survey are as follows:

	# responses	% of total
Willing to sell or exchange	80 yes	84%
	4 maybe	4%
	11 no	12%
	95	100%

Eighty four percent of the landowners responding to the survey indicated they were willing to sell or exchange their property at fair market value. Extrapolating this percentage to all affected

landowners implies that 924 of the 1,100 landowners are willing to sell or exchange. Twelve percent of the people responding to the survey indicated they were not interested in selling or trading. Extrapolating this percentage to all affected landowners implies that 132 of the 1,100 landowners are not willing to sell or exchange. This figure approximates the number of landowners at the public meetings in opposition to the project.

Response to A–7: Approximately 10% - 15% of the landowners appear to be unwilling to sell their land. This was expected based upon the survey. It is unfortunate that not all the landowners are willing to sell. Landowners will be compensated at fair market value and therefore will have an opportunity to reinvest their money else where. Without acquisition of private land, the entire project is not viable. The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area represents a solution to the existing problems associated with unmanaged OHV recreation.

Response to A–8: This may be true. A tax consultant or Certified Public Account (CPA) should be consulted for accurate information regarding tax advantages.

Response to A–9: Several landowners at the public meetings stated that land should be purchased "out in the desert" for these activities to occur. The Management Area is located on undeveloped desert land that will be retained as such for the recreational enjoyment of present and future generations.

Response to A–10: The majority of affected landowners are willing to sell their land for development of the Management Area. However, potential developments on private land within the Management Area boundaries would not be compatible with the activities proposed in the plan. Therefore, while it is undesirable to exercise the right of eminent domain, it is the only method available to acquire land from unwilling sellers.

Acquisition Phases

11. When will phase 4 begin? *Can landowners be advised of the phase their land is in for acquisition? *What if a landowner is willing to sell immediately but their land is located in phase 2?

Response to A–11: Land acquisition is scheduled to commence in the fall of 1990 after the completion of the final plan. Land will be acquired in phases as identified on Illustration 3 in the Management Plan. Landowners will be contacted regarding acquisition. Efforts will be made to acquire from willing sellers first.

Land Appraisals

12. What is fair market value? *My land was purchased several years ago hoping it would rise in value; will this be taken into consideration when determining land values? *Will comps be taken from more than the immediate area when determining fair market value? *Will there be a different land value on the lakebed versus land in the Shadow Mountains?
13. At what point will land appraisals be taken? *Land was bought to set aside to make a profit. Who will be making the appraisals? *Will appraisers be certified by one of several national professional societies?
14. Will the tax base change when the area is acquired?
15. If land is donated what will be given in return?
16. Will landowners be allowed to trade in cases of less than 640 acres?

Response to A-12: Fair market value represents the value of comparable parcels of land. This value reflects several factors which influence the price of land. This includes such things as comparable sales in the area, access to the land, the availability of utilities, and the best use of the land. The closest comparable parcels that have recently sold will be used in determining fair market value. Landowners will be contacted and invited to provide information for use in the appraisal process. See response 38.2.

Response to A-13: Land appraisals for acquisition will be completed prior to negotiations with the landowner regarding price. One appraisal may be completed for similar parcels in the same area. San Bernardino County will function as acquisition agent and be responsible for conducting the appraisals. Appraisers will be certified by one of several recognized national professional societies. See response 26.4.

Response to A-14: The tax base of a parcel only changes when the parcel is sold.

Response to A-15: The value of donated property can in many circumstances be deducted as a gift. A tax consultant or CPA should be contacted.

Response to A-16: It is more costly for both the government and the landowner to perform an exchange on small acreage. Exchanges are based on value for value and not acre for acre. The government does not have many small parcels; most public land is in large tracts of greater than 640 acres. San Bernardino County, as acquisition agent can only perform fee purchases. Any exchanges greater than 640 acres must be conducted by BLM, and such exchanges are a very lengthy, costly, and drawn out process. See response 19.1.

Zone of Influence

17. I own land up off the Princess Pat Road. What is happening up here? *What are you doing near Grey Mountain in the zone of influence?

Response to A-17: No land will be acquired within the zone of influence. The zone of influence is an area immediately adjacent to the Management Area that may be indirectly impacted from the proposed action. Personnel assigned to the Management Area will respond to situations in this zone to reduce OHV related impacts (such as trespass).

Mineral Rights

18. In other projects similar to this has BLM allowed landowners to retain mineral rights? *What about mineral values? *How many parcels have oil value?

Response to A-18: Mineral estates will be acquired with the surface estate unless they have been separated previously. The southern portion of the Management Area is part of a large geographic region stretching from the Cajon Pass to Hesperia to Highway 58, that has potential for oil and gas.

B. AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES

Permitted Activities

1. Permits should be available for all parties and not just special interests. *Will there be concessions, and if so can landowners bid on them? *Will alcohol and drugs be sold in the Management Area? *Are you going to allow buildings and facilities which can be used to provide other recreation related services?
2. Why have "hare and hound" motorcycle races been singled out? These and other organized events should be allowed.

Response to B-1: Any person or entity may apply for a permit. Vending and concession permits will be available as outlined in Section III-C (Permits/Vending) of the Management Plan and Appendix B. Vendors may be allowed to sell alcohol if they acquire the proper permits from the county. Currently there are no plans to allow construction of facilities for other recreation related services. However, this policy will be reviewed in the future.

Response to B-2: Hare and Hound motorcycle races will not be allowed due to the size of the Management Area and the amount of use occurring within the boundaries. There is not enough room to allow this type of activity to occur within acceptable limits of visitor safety.

C. VISITOR MANAGEMENT

Recreation Activities

1. If OHVs are not allowed in the entrance gate because they are not registered, visitors will then ride in the area outside the Management Area. What will be done about this? Private roads are being torn up.
2. Aircraft should not be given permission to fly outside the Management Area.
3. The Management Plan proposes no shooting - it should be this way anyway.
4. The lakebed should be managed to control direction of travel, and provide areas for specific uses. Also, establish a basic speed limit. Many landsailors came to the dry lakebed in the late 1970s. They stopped coming due to the high OHV use. There now needs to be some type of control to allow both uses. It is ludicrous to allow unrestricted use on the lakebed. Controlling use will help solve problems and enhance safety.
5. Do you presently have numbers on the use by OHVs on the lakebed and how much growth do you plan?
6. I come down here during the week. I like it because no one is here. Why spend millions of dollars when during the week nobody is here?

Response to C-1: Several actions are being taken to reduce the opportunities for OHV play outside the Management Area. These include restricting vehicle use to specific routes, posting signs, and providing supplementary law enforcement services (primary responsibility will remain with the CHP and County Sheriff). These actions should also stop the damage to private roads from OHVs. See response E-2.

Response to C-2: The Federal Aviation Administration is responsible for setting guidelines concerning the use of aircraft. The BLM may only limit the taking off and landing of aircraft on public land.

Response to C-3: The comment on no shooting has been noted.

Response to C-4: Several existing laws will be enforced relative to the safe use and operation of recreational vehicles/craft. No activities will be allowed that create unacceptable safety concerns. Rights-of-way governing the use of vehicles and aircraft will be enforced. An ad-hoc committee is being formed to review these standards, consider their application, and to assess the need for additional guidelines. See responses 8.1 and 26.1.

Response to C-5: Current estimated use is approximately 110,000 visitors per year. Approximately 85% of all recreational use is associated with OHVs. The draft plan was developed with the assumption that use would approach 300,000 visitors per year in the late 1990s.

Response to C-6: Most, but not all, of the recreational use of the Management Area does occur on weekends. During the week the area is also used by a variety of commercial interests such as the filming industry and private firms engaged in research and development. Land use fees are paid for the commercial use of public land.

Fees

7. Will property owners be allowed in for free? Will landowners (existing) be grand-fathered into the management area, so they do not have to pay entrance fees? Will landowners who border the Management Area be allowed key access? Keys to the gate -what is an emergency and who decides?
8. It doesn't seem right spending green sticker funds to create an area where people are charged to enter.
9. I am opposed to user fees. I consider any park a public park and because someone is poor, or has a large family they shouldn't be denied access to public lands for so called user fees.

Response to C-7: Persons who own land within the boundaries of the Management Area will be allowed free access to their land for as long as they own the land. There will be no clauses or exceptions, all other landowners outside the Management Area boundary must pay an entry fee for use of the facility. The possibility exist that individuals and organizations may be issued a key for access through the secondary gates. The guidelines for issuing keys are identified in action 9, section III-C of the Management Plan. An emergency is a situation that calls for immediate action.

Response to C-8: The intent of the OHV Grant (Green Sticker) fund is to provide opportunities for OHV recreation and to maintain the State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRA). The Management Area is being developed with these funds to provide OHV opportunities. The entrance fees will go towards ongoing operation and maintenance costs, thereby reducing the demand for grant funds. See responses 11.3 and 43.2.

Response to C-9: Entry fees are comparable to other SVRAs and are set at a rate to ensure access to all persons.

Signs and Information

10. Consider signs on the lakebed that say "enter" and "use at your own risk". Restrict street legal vehicles and take a hard look at free and unrestricted use.
11. If there is no legal access why are access signs up?
12. You will find that OHV riders will not obey speed limits inside the Management Area.

Response to C-10: Signs will be developed to advise visitors of the conditions within the Management Area. This area is being developed for OHV use, therefore, restricting vehicle use is inappropriate. See responses C-5, 2.1, and 8.1.

Response to C-11: Mountain View Road has been maintained as an access road for over six years with the permission of the affected landowners. This is a temporary solution as there is no public easement. The Management Plan provides a long-term solution.

Response to C-12: The law enforcement Rangers have a variety of methods to ensure compliance with all the rules and regulations.

D. RESOURCE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Fugitive Dust

1. There is a thermocline on the lakebed that could result in too much dust blowing off the lakebed and into the homes of the community.

Response to D-1: Management actions (section III-D) will be implemented to control the amount of fugitive dust blowing off the lakebed during duststorms.

Environmental Concerns

2. I question the use of this land for "the good of the public". I believe it is destructive to the environment.

Response to D-2: It is true that setting 24,400 acres aside for intensive motorized vehicle recreation will result in degradation of the natural environment. However, this is a less destructive alternative to the natural environment than leveling the land for the urban sprawl that some landowners prefer. Potential impacts have been analyzed in the environmental assessment. See responses 26.5 and 38.1.

E. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Perimeter Barrier

1. The BLM presence proposed for this project is too much. We don't want an entry station where you come in and pay your fee. We don't want a maintenance yard. We don't want a building there. By creating this area you are only going to draw in a whole lot of people.
2. I object to the cost. I do not want a fence.
3. I am concerned that the fence will block property at the west end of the lakebed that is presently being used for recreation purposes.
4. A man with a welding torch in his truck can cut down the fence in nothing flat.
5. The plan intensifies too much use in too small an area. The fence should only be installed to prevent conflicts with neighboring landowners and not to confine the use in one specific area.

Response to E-1: Providing facilities and personnel will resolve the key issues associated with unmanaged recreation use of the area. The perimeter fence combined with law enforcement will resolve the trespass issue. Entry fees have been identified as a revenue source for reducing overall costs. The level of facility development has been kept to a minimum with each facility designed to meet a specific need. See responses 36.3 and 57.1.

Response to E-2: A key provision of the Management Plan is the development of a perimeter fence. During the planning process the local communities expressed a concern that OHV use be contained within a managed area. The problem of OHV trespass is prevalent throughout the high desert. If OHV play was compatible in residential neighborhoods there would be no need for this project. They are not, and some of the visitors to El Mirage have continually demonstrated an inability to avoid occupied private property.

Response to E-3: The entire perimeter will be fenced. It is unfortunate that the fence will block several routes of travel that people have historically used to access the area. In light of the current trespass situation and given the fact that entry fees will be charged, access must be controlled.

Response to E-4: Any fence/barrier that is put up will be susceptible to vandalism. It is not likely that many visitors will carry a torch to cut the cable.

Response to E-5: There are also several people who argue the area is too large. One main thrust of this project is to allow OHV use to continue in a designated area. See comments E-2 and E-3.

F. MAINTENANCE

Road Maintenance

1. How will Old El Mirage Road be maintained?

Response to F-1: Old El Mirage Road is a county road and will continue to be maintained as such.

G. GENERAL COMMENTS

The following comments did not address specific actions contained within the draft Management Plan. These items of general interest have been reproduced for the readers information.

Representation of Landowners

1. There are representatives from several users groups, but what organization represents the landowners?
2. I would like to know why there won't be further meetings or additional time for input. What are the alternatives for the people who apparently are opposed to the Management Area? What actions can be taken to oppose this formally, officially?
3. I was not notified of the proposal. I would like the community of El Mirage to start announcing what really is going on and to clarify their intentions.
4. Is this a proposal or is this concrete? If the majority of the landowners were opposed to the project what would happen?
5. Who is in charge of listening and maybe stopping this whole thing and getting some real input from what people really want; not just a random sampling and a group of committees that no one never knew about.

Response to G-1: From the beginning, the planning for the Management Area has incorporated public comment. The first series of public meetings were held in Victorville in 1982. Another series of public meetings were held in 1985 during preparation of the *Feasibility Study*. The Management Area was formally created with the signing of the Interagency Agreement at a public meeting in 1988. A third series of public meetings were held in 1989 to identify the issues to address in the Management Plan. On several occasions since 1982 spokespersons from the BLM have attended regularly scheduled public meetings held by the El Mirage Homeowners Improvement Association (EMIA). Furthermore, a representative from the local community served on the Workgroup.

Absentee landowners were not intentionally excluded from the process. An assumption was made that when a landowner sells their property they would also be selling their interest in the project. Therefore, the involvement of absentee landowners was limited to

a survey to determine the feasibility of the project based on the willingness of landowners to sell. See responses A-6 and A-7.

Response to G-2: The purpose of the Management Plan is to identify a workable solution to a series of issues. During the public comment period for the draft Management Plan no additional issues were raised other than those already addressed. There were no significant comments regarding the resolution of the identified issues. There is some opposition, however, to the acquisition of private land. This was anticipated.

The decision to implement the Management Plan can be appealed to the Office of the Secretary, Department of Interior. A case file would then be sent to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) to be heard. The party filing an appeal must have standing; they must be adversely affected by implementation of the plan. IBLA would rule on whether or not BLM followed the appropriate procedures in reaching the decision. A notice of appeal must be filed within thirty days of adoption of the final plan (anticipated to be August 17, 1990).

Response to G-3: Refer to comment G-1.

Response to G-4: The Cooperative Management Area was formally established in November of 1988 with the public signing of the Interagency Agreement. The draft Management Plan is a proposal for the development and management of the area. This project would not have progressed this far had there been overwhelming opposition on the part of the affected landowners.

Response to G-5: The draft Management Plan is consistent with the Desert Conservation Area Plan which reflects a balanced management program developed with the participation of the full spectrum of public interest groups and individuals. The basic direction and philosophy of the Management Area was carefully crafted in consideration of unique geographical resources and historic uses. Refer to comment G-1.

Alternative Management Schemes

6. Why not turn this into a private company and make the landowners shareholders and then operate it for a profit?
7. Since there is so much more public land further north toward Edwards Air Force Base with fewer houses, why isn't more OHV activity allowed there.
8. The riding area is stuck between a group of residents to the north and a group to the south who do not want riding near their homes. Public land that is good for riding is being closed down to the north. You should not be doing this.
9. The plan intensifies too much OHV use in too small an area.

Response to G-6: A feasibility study was prepared in 1985 which considered private and quasi-public management. This option was dropped from further consideration because of the lack of such an entity and the inability to manage all uses. The option remains to turn over management of the entire facility to a concession operator in the future.

Response to G-7: Shadow Mountain Road will be paved in the future and there was no practical way to incorporate land on both sides of the road into one managed area with controlled access. The area between Shadow Mountain Road and Edwards Air Force Base is also considered higher quality habitat for the desert tortoise.

Response to G-8: The boundaries reflect careful consideration of several factors including the amount and location of existing public land, historical visitor use patterns, mix of terrain, compatible soil types, environmental factors (wind & rain runoff), wildlife concerns, existing residential development, existing county roads, funding constraints, and other potential future developments in the area.

Response to G-9: Comment noted.

Liability

10. What about lawsuits? Somebody is going to get injured on this piece of property whether it is private land or public land. You're going to have law suits coming out your ears. You don't care, but we care. We have to pay the taxes that pay the lawsuits, and that isn't right.
11. I own land in the center to be acquired in phase 4. In the meantime you are going to have heavy earth moving equipment, tractors, trucks, bikers, and everybody else running up and down across the land. Is the landowner liable if something happens? How do I protect my property?

Response to G-10: Discussions with the State reveal that from their experience with the SVRAs there are in fact few lawsuits.

Response to G-11: Landowners are currently liable for what happens on their land and will remain so until they no longer hold title to their land. In cases involving recreation use, landowners typically are not held liable except where alterations to the property result in a hazardous situation. A landowner is also responsible to identify their property to prevent trespass.

No new uses are proposed that are not already occurring on the land in the El Mirage/Shadow Mountain area.

Need for the Project

12. This project is a good idea. Because of the environmentalists and everything else, the off-roaders have been limited again, and again, and again. They climb on their bikes and just get out and have some fun.

13. A project like this is fundamental for providing public recreation in the future.

14. A park is needed where kids can come out and play.

15. The concept is good if it can be worked out.

16. It shows insight to recognize the value of a very special natural resource, El Mirage dry lake.

17. We will have a place for the future where we can continue to landsail and we can continue to use OHVs. It will be an asset to the local community instead of a detriment. And, if we don't save it now, we will lose it.

18. The area that they need is necessary because the bikers and quads tear up the ground.

19. Take into account that this particular lake is one of very few areas that can be used. It is the finest clay surface that is available and there are 1,000s of visitors who visit the lake every year and who use the surrounding area. Right now it is uncontrolled and people are going out into the communities. With this new park going in, use will be controlled and regulated.

Response to G-12 thru G-19: These are opinions regarding the need for the Management Area.

3. Response to Written Comments

Following is an analysis of the comments, questions, and concerns contained in letters received by the BLM Barstow Resource Area Office. These letters were received during the formal 45 day public comment period. A response has been prepared for each letter. The original letters have been reproduced for the reader to view and are grouped together following the response section.

A breakdown of the letters received is as follows:

In support of project	45	32%
Object to project or some aspect of it	89	64%
Neutral	5	4%
Total letters	139	100%

Of the 45 letters received in support of the project, 41 were original letters and 4 were letters with a similar content. These 4 letters have been reproduced once, Letter 10.

Of the 89 letters received opposing the project, 71 were the same form letter. One response has been prepared to the form letter. The form letter, Letter 26, has been reproduce once. The names from each form letter have been compiled on a list that follows the response to this letter. In several instances, one individual mailed the same letter and/or form letter to BLM, the Counties of San Bernardino and Los Angeles, and the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

These letters were forwarded to the BLM Barstow Resource Area Office. In such cases, only one of the letters is reproduced and only one response has been prepared. Several of the signatures on the form letter were difficult to read, one was completely illegible, and many of the letters did not have a return address. Given this situation, it was some what difficult to assure that the name of every individual that signed a form letter is included on the name list that is attatched to the response to the form letter.

Response to letter 1:
1.1 Land acquisition is scheduled to commence with the completion and approval of the final plan in the fall of 1990.

Response to Letter 2:
2.1 The decision has been made not to designate formal use areas or to zone for use on the lakebed (except for a mud play area) at this time. There are accidents. However, these are primarily due to the nature of the dangerous activities in which recreationists engage. Very few accidents on the lakebed are a result of conflicting uses. Use of the lakebed will be monitored as outlined in Section III-G.

During the scoping for this plan, the various user groups agreed that it was not appropriate to zone or restrict use at this time. A representative from the landsailing community was a member of the Workgroup that developed this philosophy of management. The Cooperating Association will serve as the mechanism to involve visitors in the long-term management of the area, and as such, will continue to monitor and address this concern. See response 8.1.

Response to Letter 3:
3.1 Inholding area refers to a block of private land that is surrounded by public land. The inholding area is located in the central portion of the Management Area and consist of the phase 4 acquisition program. The final Management Plan calls for acquisition of these lands after the completion of acquisition of phases 1,2, and 3. Section III-A and Illustration 3 identify the schedule for land acquisition.

Response to Letter 4:
Comments noted.

Response to letter 5:
5.1 Representatives from the various groups that use El Mirage participated in the development of the draft Management Plan. A variety of terrain was included and restrictions have been kept to a minimum to provide an optimum setting for recreation.

5.2 Approximately 85% of all visitors to the area engage in some type of OHV activity. Visitors that bring land yachts, gyrocopters and other types of recreational vehicles also generally bring OHVs with them. This mix of vehicles is recognized and as a result OHV grant funds (green sticker) account for approximately 85% of the total funding.

5.3 A variety of terrain is included within the Management Area. Refer to response G-8.

5.4 The fence has been identified as the best solution to control the OHV related problems. The trespass situation has become so intolerable that the local residents have demanded a solution. Experience at El Mirage and other OHV riding areas in California has proven that the most effective way to contain use is with a fence. See response 35.3.

Response to Letter 6:
6.1 The County of San Bernardino will be contacting affected landowners in regards to land acquisition according to the phases identified in Illustration 3.

6.2 See response A-12.

Response to Letter 7:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 8:
8.1 Several of the actions in the plan represent efforts to control use on the lakebed without having to zone use. For example there will now be limits on camping, limits on the use of aircraft, a designated mud play area, restrictions during wind storms, established rights-of-way, and directed use areas. Several of the conflicts that have historically arisen amongst the various types of uses should be resolved by these actions. See response 2.1.

Response to letter 9:
9.1 Some of the land east of the lakebed may potentially contain deposits of limestone. Mineral values will be considered in the determination of fair market value. Land owners will be contacted and invited to provide information for use in the appraisal process. See response A-18.

Response to Letter 10:
Comments noted. A similar letter was also received from the following individuals: Martin J. Eiler, Steven C Norr, Mark S. Scott.

Response to letter 11:
11.1 Visitor counts include visitors along the access road, on the lakebed, around Nash Hill, and in the El Mirage Valley. The count also includes use around the Shadow Mountains, Adobe Mountain, and along Highway 395. Primary vehicles are counted (vehicles in which visitors arrive) and multiplied by 3.5 to determine the total visitor count. The 3.5 represents an average amount of visitors per vehicle (as determined by field studies). Visitor counts have been kept to document the use at El Mirage since the mid 1970s. Counts are taken by personnel on the ground, and have been checked against aerial counts to assess their accuracy. Ground counts have proven to be very reliable.

11.2 Since the BLM initiated regular patrols of the El Mirage area, visitor use has dropped from an average of 150,000 visitors per year to 110,000 visitors per year. Coordinated action is being taken on a desert wide basis to cope with the displaced visitors. This drop in use was expected given an increase in law enforcement personnel. However, based upon other similar facilities in California, family use levels will dramatically increase once the fence is constructed and there is a higher degree of security.

11.3 The primary source of funding for development of the Management Area is the OHV grant (Green Sticker) fund. Monies in this fund are primarily derived from the registration of OHVs and a portion of the state gas tax for the specific purpose of providing opportunities for OHV use. The cooperating federal, state, and county governments are fully committed to this project and as such will allocate appropriate funds. Also see responses C-8, 26.6, 27.1, 43.2, and 43.4.

11.4 The environmental analysis recognizes that if the private land is not acquired it most likely will be developed and displace the existing recreation use, similar to what has happened in other counties. Noise and air quality have been addressed in section III-D of the Management Plan.

Response to Letter 12:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 13:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 14:
14.1 See responses A-1 and A-4.

14.2 The Management Area will be managed for multiple-uses. Recreation is the primary use and will remain as such. However, a variety of other uses will be allowed to continue. This includes mining, grazing, commercial filming, and research and development.

14.3 The sale of beverages in glass containers will not be allowed. The sale of alcohol will be allowed in accordance with the California Desert District policy on vending. See section III-B in the Plan.

Response to Letter 15:
15.1 See response 13.1.

Response to Letter 16:
See responses E-2 and 5.4.

Response to Letter 17:
17.1 New ideas are welcome and will be given appropriate consideration. A Cooperating Association will be formed to coordinate all volunteer activities.

Response to Letter 18:
18.1 Permits are available for organized recreation events including activities involving motorcycles and ATVs such as motorcross events. The area is not large enough and receives too much dispersed use to allow specifically Hare and Hound motorcycle races. Management actions 1 and 2 in section III-B, and Appendix B address permits for recreation activities.

Response to Letter 19:
19.1 Land exchanges involving acreage less than 640 acres are too complicated and expensive to be a viable alternative for BLM and the private landowner. In a land exchange the landowner must pay for the preliminary title report, land appraisal, title insurance, closing and escrow costs, taxes due and payable, cost of clearing mining claims, cost of land surveys of the offered lands deemed necessary either by the Bureau or Title Insurance Company, any and all realtors fees and commissions, and all other costs above and beyond appraised value required to procure free title.

The Bureau will normally bear the following costs: archeological surveys; botanical surveys; mineral reports; threatened and endangered species clearance; nominal mitigation relating to cultural, botanical, or T&E species; the environmental assessment; publication costs; and cadastral survey on selected lands. The benefit/cost ratio of these expenses are advantageous to both parties only when large acreage is involved. See responses A-7, A-12, and A-16.

19.2 This project does provide a vital service in that it will set approximately 24,400 acres of public land aside for current and

future generations to enjoy in a multiple-use context, primarily for OHV recreation.

19.3 The environmental assessment evaluated two scenarios. In one, the Management Plan is implemented for which impacts to the natural environment have been identified and appropriate steps are being taken to minimize their extent. In the other scenario, the existing public land is disposed and developed along with existing private lands for a variety of agricultural, commercial, residential, and industrial uses. It is probable that in the latter scenario the existing natural environment would be almost completely altered over time. See responses 26.5 and 58.2.

Response to Letter 20:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 21:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 22:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 23:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 24:
24.1 It is not within the scope of this plan to address rights-of-way in the zone of influence. Rights of way on public land in the zone of influence will continue to be managed by the Barstow Resource Area of the BLM in accordance with the CDCA Plan (1980, as amended).

24.2 The Department of Water and Power has been placed on the project mailing list.

Response to Letter 25:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 26: **FORM LETTER**
26.1 See response G-1.

26.2 See responses A-6 and A-7.

26.3 Planning and development of the Management Area have proceeded based on a survey that indicated approximately 85% of the affected landowners are willing to sell. The right to exercise eminent domain has been retained in the event some landowner(s) are unwilling to sell. To guarantee the public long-term access and to effectively manage the uses, the land must be converted to public ownership.

Implementation of the Management Plan will resolve several long standing issues concerning trespass and OHV use and will therefore make the surrounding area more attractive for private development. Otherwise, the existing issues will remain unsolved and will be compounded by the increasing population in southern California.

The increasing population is resulting in expanded development into several areas that have historically provided recreation opportunities. As a result there is a tremendous demand to set land aside for recreation purposes, particularly OHV use. The El Mirage area has been used by recreationists since the late 1930's; it is a logical area to set aside for recreation use in the future. Given the unique natural features of the area, historic use cannot be picked-up and moved somewhere else. See response A-1.

26.4 The actions of all government agencies are open to scrutiny by the public. The same holds true for land appraisals. The county's designated appraisers must, by law, assess the true value the market reflects.

26.5 The federal government must comply with the regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Accordingly there are three different levels of environmental review depending on the magnitude and scope of a project. In brief summary, categorical exclusions are for small no-impact projects, environmental assessments are for activity level plans and larger projects, and environmental impact statements (EIS) are required for major projects. The federal government does not prepare environmental impact reports (EIRs). Environmental impact reports are prepared to meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The BLM prepared an EIS for the California Desert Conservation Area Plan (CDCA) in 1980. In this plan the historic recreation and commercial uses were recognized at El Mirage dry lake and the area was classified open for intensive recreation and vehicle use. The CDCA Plan left the surrounding public lands unclassified because there was no obvious method to resolve the other issues associated with the land status. However, the CDCA plan called upon the BLM to work with the California Off-highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission to develop further OHV opportunities. Additionally, the CDCA Plan called for the BLM to prepare site specific activity plans to implement the CDCA Plan.

The Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area is a site specific activity plan that has been prepared according to the requirements of NEPA. The environmental assessment prepared for the plan considers impacts to both the human and natural resources, and assess proposed mitigation to reduce such impacts. A determination has been made that there will be no significant impacts, after mitigation, resulting from the implementation of the

Management Plan. And therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

The Management Plan is in compliance with CEQA. Upon release of the draft Management Plan in March, 1990, the State of California published a legal notice in the San Bernardino Sun newspaper stating that an environmental assessment (as required under NEPA) is being utilized as the CEQA compliance document.

26.6 The implementation table in the draft Management Plan represents approximate costs. The key to define the abbreviations was mistakenly left out. On page 62 in the draft Management Plan, item 1, land acquisition, the figures in the PROC (procurement) row were mistakenly placed in the WM (workmonth) row. These errors have been corrected in the final plan.

26.7 A major intent of this project is to provide a fenced and controlled area for recreation use. In return surrounding lands will not be available for OHV play. This is a compromise that was worked out through the combined efforts of the local communities, the visitors to the area, San Bernardino County, the State, and the Federal Government.

Several measures are being taken to ensure that visitors to the area recreate within the Management Area. These actions include the designation of public land for intensive vehicle recreation use, the acquisition of private land, the installation of a perimeter fence, the printing and distribution of brochures, the installation of signs, the limiting of OHV opportunities on the public land surrounding the Management Area, the designation of routes in the zone of influence, patrols by law enforcement Rangers, and coordination among the BLM, the County Sheriff and the Highway Patrol.

The heading for form letter, 26, is titled "El Mirage Landowners". However, no where in the letter does it state that the individual signing the letter is in fact a landowner within the boundaries of the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area.

The names of the following individuals were included on one or more form letters:

Linda Atkinson
Vernon Baker
Lori A. & Royce L. Bounds
Merle Brown
George W. Burnett
Michael Cho
Marlene Corder
Jesus & Silvia Delgadillo
Virna Dickinson
Charles W. Dietz
Carl Atkinson
Al Bertrand Jr.
Teresa Brown
Hilary Bunker
Lenora Burnett
Zane Corder
Joseph Dagata
Judith Dickinson
Richard Dickinson
Kathlen Dietz

Marta Durair
Karen Fitzpatrick
Indelisa Galindo
T. Garcia
Rita M. Hayes
Dennis Hildebrandt
Robert M. Jarrett
Kenneth F. Kienzle
Fred and Mary McCormick
Donald McLarty
C. R. Marshall
Norma T. Melundy
Philip L. Mertz
Dennis Montalvan
Jerry Moore
G. Nunez
Ralph Olum
E. Pettit
Jene A. & Janet L. Policy
Victor M. Raugel
Martha Reyes
Benjamin Salazar
Agustin C. Saucedo
Conrrado Saverdo
Isabell Standish
Thayle F. Taylor
Esther Torres
Thomas Tritto
Robert Trui
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Wickwire
Michael Yellman

James E. Farmer
Benjamin Galazar
L. Garcia
Mr/Mrs Loran Harrington
Jean Hildebrandt
Marjorie C. Hopkins
Samuel Keith
Mr. & Mrs. Wasil Kwitka
Charles & Sandra McCune
Lee Mabry
W. E. Marshall
Kathleen Mendoza
Carlos A. Montalvan
Celia Montalvan
Evelyn Munday
Tomas Nunez
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Olvera
R. Perez
Welhelm Ramstein
Amos Rezeb
Elsa S. Ruiz
Isabel Salazar
Marie C. Saucedo
Maria C. Saxton
Dr. FKC. Sycip
Salbador Tores
Mr. & Mrs. Robert B. Torres
Estella Tritto
Jerry Vogler
Jeff Wisniewski
Baltazar Zerrin

Response to Letter 27:

27.1 Section H, Administration, outlines the role each of the various agencies are responsible for in developing and managing the Management Area. The state of California will be providing approximately 85% of the funding from the OHV grant (Green Sticker) fund. The balance of the funding will be from a variety of other sources, including, but not limited to, other grants, other agency funds, and BLM appropriated funds. Entry fees will be used to defray the ongoing operation and maintenance costs. See responses C-8 and 11.3.

27.2 The county, state, and federal government each manage several large scale recreation areas. In this particular case, their efforts have been combined to take advantage of each agencies resources such as funding, personnel, support structure, regulatory authority, expertise, experience, equipment, and land.

Approximately 12,000 acres of existing public land are being used to begin the project. It is the location and scattered pattern of existing public land that is the source of many of the issues.

Trespass and the associated problems will not be resolved until land is consolidated into one manageable block.

27.3 See responses A-6 and A-7.

Response to Letter 28:
28.1 The Management Area will be managed to allow for multiple-uses. Commercial filming is recognized as a historical use of the Management Area and will continue to be allowed in the future.

Response to Letter 29:
29.1 The BLM and the Community of El Mirage, including the Volunteer Fire Department (Station 11) have worked cooperatively in providing EMT and fire protection within the Management Area. This working relationship is expected to continue. Emergency services are currently being provided by a variety of local, county, state, and federal agencies. Existing agreements will be updated to reflect the changing situation as appropriate.

During scoping for the Management Plan, BLM and representatives from the Volunteer Fire Department, San Bernardino County Forestry and Fire Warden Department, and CDF discussed options for providing fire and emergency services. This group agreed that the BLM would be the primary provider of EMT services and would assist with fires. To fulfill this obligation 3 EMT positions have been identified on the Management Area staff and the 3 BLM law enforcement Rangers are EMT trained and equipped.

The El Mirage Volunteer Fire Department was intended to provide backup services for busy days and at night. The major concern was that the single engine at El Mirage not be committed to an incident within the Management Area in the event of an emergency in the community. To compensate for this, the BLM agreed to explore the option of making surplus federal equipment available to the fire department.

The discussion contained in the attachments to this letter assume an immediate and drastic change in the status quo. This is not the case. When the El Mirage Volunteer Fire Department was founded in 1986, it was recognized by all parties, that as private land was acquired within the Management Area there would be loss in operating income for the fire department. The majority of the revenue loss will not occur in the first 5 years of the project; over 50% of all the parcels within the Management Area are in acquisition phase 4. Furthermore, the BLM pays hundreds of 1,000s of in lieu tax dollars to San Bernardino County for the loss of property tax revenue. The County is responsible for the internal distribution of these funds.

Response to Letter 30:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 31:
31.1 See responses A-12, A-18, and 38.2.

Response to Letter 32:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 33:
33.1 This option was considered during preparation of the feasibility study in 1985, and was reviewed again during preparation of the draft Management Plan. The boundary in the Management Plan represents a compromise between the desires of local residents and the needs of recreational visitors.

In addition to acquiring land in the sections you mention, land would also have to be acquired in sections 25, 36, and 33. There would also have to be approximately 20 miles of additional perimeter fencing, and some type of bridges or tunnels would have to be installed to cross Shadow Mountain Road (it is identified for paving). The cost for these would be prohibitive. Other constraints include a local population that is stiffly opposed to such an action and potential impacts to tortoise habitat. See responses G-7, G-8, and 35.2

33.2 One of the underlying reasons for creating the Management Area is that OHV play is currently occurring throughout the entire zone of influence. The area would need to encompass nearly 100,000 acres to include all the historical use areas. The cost of acquiring the private land in such an area would be prohibitive. See response G-8.

33.3 Hare and Hound events are commonly understood to involve numerous riders starting at once and traveling at high speed to finish first. There is a wide variety of activities that occur within the Management Area. Therefore the decision was made to list just the activities which are not allowed, rather than to try to list the specific activities which can occur. Enduro events are not prohibited.

33.4 To specify the dust control agents at this time would unnecessarily limit future options should additional agents become available. The dust control agents that are ultimately used will comply with federal and state laws in regards to protection of the environment.

33.5 Law enforcement Rangers assigned to the Management Area will be trained in the correct procedures to use a decibel meter. The meters will be calibrated according to the manufactures specifications.

Response to Letter 34:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 35:

35.1 The Management Area includes a total of approximately 24,400 acres comprising a variety of terrain. The lakebed proper includes over 3,000 acres and represents approximately 12% of the total acreage available for OHV use.

35.2 There are many constraints affecting the land north of Shadow Mountain Road that preclude allowing OHV play in this area. This includes the fact that one day Shadow Mountain Road will be paved, that most of the public land in this area is in scattered blocks intermingled with private land, that the residents in the area are fed up with the trespass, that OHV riders continue to establish new trails, that much of this land will be used as exchange base for the Land Tenure Adjustment Project, and that this area is considered valuable habitat for the desert tortoise. Also see responses C-1, E-2, E-3, 5.4, and 26.7.

35.3 The perimeter barrier has been designed with safety as a primary concern. Project personnel will install and maintain safety markers. The responsible thing to do, given that current use covers over 100,000 acres of private and public lands, is to define specifically where OHVs can and cannot play. A fence will do this 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is the most efficient means available to delineate a boundary and control ingress and egress. See response 5.4

Response to Letter 36:

36.1 The access road was located at the east end of the lakebed because this provides the shortest route into the Management Area. Actions will be implemented to reduce the amount of fugitive dust generated during wind storms (section III-D, action 6).

36.2 The local residents have made several attempts to sign the roads as "private property". The BLM has also signed some roads "private property/closed to public use". Each time the signs have been torn down. A court order is required to determine whether a private road is public domain, and this has not occurred.

36.3 The facilities planned are the bare minimum and are in response to specific needs. The facilities include a perimeter barrier to contain use, an entrance station to collect fees, maintained roads to provide access, restrooms for sanitation, and a headquarters/maintenance yard to accommodate the staff. Restrooms are necessary because many of the visitors to the area arrive in passenger cars and trucks which are not self contained camping units.

36.4 A primary vehicle is one in which visitors to the Management Area arrive. This includes all self-propelled vehicles driven into the area, not vehicles towed or on trailers.

36.5 Compliance checks for equipment and registration typically include looking for Green Stickers and spark arresters. Additional checks may include registration on primary vehicles and trailers; and checking driver licenses, lights, and tow chains.

36.6 There are several tasks related to providing emergency medical services that warrant a full time position. This includes maintenance of equipment, inventory management, retrieval of equipment sent to hospitals with patients, training, accident investigation, report preparation, and other duties related to the Management Area. These individuals will provide assistance to other project personnel e.g. maintenance work during low use periods.

36.7 Regardless of the level of use the area will receive, certain actions must be taken to maintain the natural environment in order to provide opportunities for sustained use. To do otherwise would violate federal and state law, and could result in a complete breakdown of the existing environment. The result of this would be a barren landscape, severe dust storms, and a setting that is not suitable for recreation activities.

36.8 Dump stations are typically provided by private industry and are available outside the Management Area. The City of Adelanto currently provides support services for visitors to the Management Area, such as food, gas, parts, and repair. The city has volunteered to require the next applicant for a service station to install a dump station. The nearest existing dump station is at the Shell station on the corner of Highway 395 and Palmdale Road (Highway 18). As the size of the community of El Mirage increases, many of these services will be provided locally.

Response to Letter 37:

37.1 See responses C-8, 5.2, and 11.3.

37.2 See responses 26.5 and 19.3.

37.3 The City of Adelanto has been involved with this project from its inception and supports development of the Management Area. The city provides valuable business services to the visitors who frequent the area. In addition, the city's emergency crews and equipment respond to incidents involving visitors, and the city police department assists with performing OHV registration and spark arrestor compliance checks.

37.4 The draft Management Plan was prepared by a team of professionals with training and experience in land use and natural resource planning.

37.5 The appropriate government and elected officials are involved with the development of the Management Area and as such are aware of the various concerns expressed.

Response to Letter 38:

38.1 If the problems associated with the use of OHVs were restricted to the El Mirage area, the county, state, and federal government would cooperate to close the area down. However, the problem is much larger and affects several communities and the desert as a whole. In the high desert people ride OHVs in the streets of Adelanto, El Mirage, Phelan, Pinon Hills, Oak Hills, Victorville, Apple Valley, and Hesperia; they ride in sensitive environments such as Afton Canyon, Fremont Valley, around the Calico Hills, and in several wilderness study areas; they ride on power line roads, along railroad tracks, along the aqueduct, and on pipeline rights-of-way; they also ride in other areas throughout southern California, down by Palm Springs, over by the Salton Sea, and in the foothills of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains.

There is an urgent need to establish legal riding areas in southern California in order to focus this use to protect property, lives, and natural resource values. El Mirage is a historical riding area and is ideally suited to provide such opportunities. The concept behind establishing such legal riding areas is to focus OHV play within specific areas thereby removing such activity from inappropriate locations. See responses E-2, G-5, and G-8.

38.2 There are several factors which influence the value of property. Speculation over the development of an International Airport in Palmdale did artificially escalate the price of land in the El Mirage area approximately 20 years ago. The Palmdale Airport has since been down graded by the Los Angeles Airport Authority from the status of an international airport to that of a regional airport.

Land will be appraised and acquired for the Management Area at fair market value. Land appraisals do not create land values, they reflect the current value of the land. The site of the Palmdale airport is over 35 miles west of El Mirage. The effect of the proposed airport on land values in El Mirage has been speculative. Other factors must still be considered when determining land values. This includes local zoning, the availability of water, utilities, access, services, and infrastructure development. See response A-12.

38.3 The El Mirage area was selected as a recreation site in recognition of the historic use, the unique natural features, and the undeveloped nature of the area. As much existing public land as possible was incorporated within the boundaries of the Management Area.

38.4 Included in section III-D of the plan are appropriate actions to reduce adverse impacts within the zone of influence. See response 19.3.

38.5 See responses 27.1 and 11.3.

38.6 There are approximately 600 residences in El Mirage, and the area is continually growing. Until a solution is found the residents, landowners, and visitors will be adversely impacted.

38.7 See response 11.3.

Response to Letter 39:
39.1 Confining OHV play into a fenced and patrolled area is intended to allow this activity to continue in a controlled setting where the impacts from such use are mitigated. Furthermore, providing legal riding areas is part of a larger commitment to remove OHV play from inappropriate locations throughout southern California.

39.2 See responses A-6 and A-7.

39.3 See responses G-1, and G-4.

Response to Letter 40:
40.1 See responses A-12 and 38.3.

Responses to Letter 41:
See responses C-1, 26.7, 35.2, and 49.1.

Response to Letter 42:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 43:
43.1 The first sentence in the draft Management Plan correctly reads "The purpose of this Management Plan is to establish goals and actions to protect the public's recreational opportunities at the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area within a multiple-use context, while protecting adjacent land consistent with applicable County General Plans." See responses 5.4, 35.3 and 45.1.

43.2 Setting the land aside for recreational use will prevent development of the land for residential, agricultural, commercial, and industrial uses, which will preclude the collection of taxes from such sources. At the same time there will be less of a demand for the services that such taxes fund. There will be less of a need for roads, schools, water development, sewage treatment, libraries, fire protection, and law enforcement that are typically associated with urban development. The Management Area will provide law enforcement and emergency medical services for the visitors.

The Management Area will attract tens of thousands of visitors to the area and as such will provide opportunities for recreation related businesses. This will stimulate the local economy by bringing in tourist dollars. There will also be opportunities

within the Management Area for private companies to conduct commercial activity including commercial filming and product testing. The typical television commercial cost $125,000 to produce. Numerous of these are filmed on the lakebed each year and a considerable amount of this money goes into the local economy.

43.3 See response A-2.

43.4 The BLM has been and will continue to pay in lieu of tax dollars to San Bernardino County for the loss of property tax revenue. See responses 43.1, 43.2 and 11.3.

43.5 Currently there is no legal access into the Management area, and much of the land around the lakebed is private. Easements and private lands must be acquired to resolve these issues.

43.6 Many of the issues are a result of the fact that until recently there has been a minimal level of public services available in the area. The BLM began to provide interim management in 1984, and a local fire district was formed in 1986. Neither the Sheriff or the Highway Patrol have the resources to adequately police recreation use in the area.

Response to Letter 44:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 45:
45.1 The primary purpose for the fence around the Management Area is to confine use and to protect adjacent private property. Unless this condition is satisfied the local communities will not support development of the Management Area. See responses 5.4 and 35.3.

Response to Letter 46:
Comment noted.

Response to Letter 47:
47.1 See response A-12.

Response to Letter 48:
48.1 Comments noted.

Response to Letter 49:
49.1 The area under discussion is the north-east corner of the zone of influence identified as the Route Inventory Area on Illustration 5. Your comment has been noted and the final plan has been changed to ensure OHV play is confined to within the designated Management Area. Refer to Section III-A of the plan; actions 6, 7, and 8.

49.2 The area immediately surrounding the Management Area is closed to vehicle travel with the exception of 24 routes of travel open only to street legal vehicles.

49.3 See responses E-2, 26.7, and 35.2.

49.4 Public land in and around the Shadow Mountains is designated unclassified and available for disposal in the California Desert Conservation Area Plan, 1980 as amended. A 1982 CDCA Plan amendment calls for managing vehicle access on unclassified land by limiting use to existing routes of travel until specific routes are identified through the route designation process. For a variety of reasons, the BLM has not fully completed the route designation process for this area.

During the planning process for the Management Area, the proliferation of routes in the Shadow Mountain area was acknowledged. Several actions have been included in the plan to address this issues, see responses 49.1 and 35.2.

49.5 The loss of wildlife in the area is due to several reasons including housing development, shooting, road kills, mining, disease, drought, grazing, predation from ravens, and habitat destruction from OHV play.

Response to Letter 50:
50.1 See response 48.1 above.

Response to Letter 51:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 52:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 53:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 54:
54.1 See response 26.5.

54.2 The setting in the Management Area will provide opportunities for a variety of recreational vehicles, including OHVs. Management of this area includes concerns for safety. See response 17.1.

Response to Letter 55:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 56:
56.1 See response 6.2.

Response to Letter 57:
57.1 There are many complex issues confronting public use of land within and adjacent to the Management Area. Many different groups and individuals are involved and each have their own needs and priorities which must be addressed. The Management Plan represents

a compromise to a complicated situation. Some developments are necessary to provide a mechanism to control use. These have been kept to a minimum at the request of the visitors. See responses E-2, 35.3, and 38.1.

57.2 See response C-8, and 11.3.

57.3 See responses E-2, 5.4, 35.3, 38.6, and 45.1.

57.4 See responses A-12, A-13, 26.3, and 26.4.

Response to Letter 58:

58.1 See responses A-1, A-7, A-9, and 26.3.

58.2 The environmental assessment prepared for this Management Plan reaches the same conclusion regarding eventual development of the Antelope and Victor Valleys. There are still too many unknown variables regarding such development to predict with certainty what will be the eventual outcome. For example, water is increasing becoming a limiting factor in future developments and may slow or stop certain types of growth.

The impacts from OHVs have been addressed and appropriate measures will be implemented to minimize the impacts. Establishment of legal riding areas allow OHV play to be confined and as such, provides protection for areas where such use is inappropriate. To state, that OHVs are destroying the land and everything on it in the same letter that claims such land will be developed for houses, is a bit contradictory. Urban development usually results in a total displacement of the native vegetation and wildlife. The use of OHVs do typically result in a degradation of vegetation and wildlife. See responses 19.3 and 26.5.

Response to Letter 59:

59.1 The draft Management Plan has been developed after several years of studying the issues. It was recognized from the beginning that it would not be possible to resolve all the issues to the complete satisfaction of everyone involved. The plan represents a reasonable approach to resolve complex issues with the input of the affected parties. See response G-1.

59.2 See responses A-6 and A-7.

59.3 See response A-12.

59.4 See response 38.2.

59.5 The decision was made not to extend the public comment period based on the fact that no new issues were identified during the public comment period. See responses G-1 and G-4.

Response to Letter 60:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 61:
Comments noted.

Response to Letter 62:
62.1 The acquisition costs have been adjusted in the final plan. See response 26.6.

62.2 Two events occur in May which skew the use statistics. First, Memorial weekend is the highest use weekend of the year, and second is a meet of the Southern California Timing Association which draws several thousand participants and visitors. See responses C-6 and 11.1.

62.3 See response 26.5.

62.4 The complete action states "Issue gate keys to permit holders and/or landowners for the east and west entrances on a limited basis and only for special situations when a clear need has been identified." This action is intended to allow authorized use of the secondary entrances on a *limited basis* for *special situations.* Visitors to the Management Area will have to enter through the main entrance.

62.5 A volunteer program has been in place for several years and provides valuable assistance in accomplishing the goals of the Management Area. During 1989 volunteers contributed several hundred hours of time. Volunteers assist with providing visitor services, the installation and maintenance of signs, and help with clean-up and special projects.

62.6 See response 26.5.

62.7 The barrier around the northern perimeter of El Mirage will be constructed of 8' sections of telephone pole connected by three strands of 1/2" wire rope. This section of barrier is intended to physically contain use and as such will be very difficult to penetrate. The remaining boundary will be fenced with metal T-post and three to five strands of smooth wire. Any barrier/fence that is installed will be susceptible to vandalism. Law enforcement and maintenance personnel will be available to cope with vandalism and similar such situations.

The perimeter barrier has been designed with safety as a primary concern.

62.8 The pumping frequency identified for the restrooms is the minimum maintenance level. This does not preclude pumping on a more frequent basis. The possibility of using waterless restrooms which require no annual pumping is being considered.

Response to Letter 63:

63.1 Increasing development in the area is resulting in increased conflicts among the recreational visitors and the local residents. Development of the Management Area will provide opportunities for the existing uses to continue with a minimum of restrictions. A perimeter fence will be installed with the primary function to delineate the perimeter of the area where OHVs can play.

Response to Letter 64:

64.1 The Wilderness Society has been placed on the mailing list and will be kept informed of future activities regarding the Management Area.

Response to Letter 65:

65.1 It is possible that some of the sites identified are potential historic sites. They will be inventoried by a qualified archeologist to determine their eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The BLM will also sample a representative portion of the Management Area to locate possible sites that are unknown. Sites that are eligible for the register will be managed through coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer. Sites that are not eligible for the historic register may be retained, protected, and interpreted for the visitors enjoyment.

65.2 Prevention of an incident is the primary provision to guard against a spill. The stipulations governing commercial use of the lakebed prohibit the pouring, spilling, leaking, or dripping of any liquid substance on the lakebed. Similar requirements exist for organized recreation activities.

The potential exists for a small spill of gas or oil. The Rangers patrolling the Management Area are trained to recognize and respond to potential hazardous situations, including spills. The BLM has a hazardous waste response plan in place for the entire California Desert District. In the event of a gas or oil spill the appropriate response will be initiated.

The effect on the environment from a gas or oil spill is dependent on several factors including the amount spilled, the substance spilled, the location, the weather, and the time elapsed from the incident to when it is reported. Small spills of approximately one gallon of gas or a quart of oil would have an insignificant impact. Larger spills (20 gallons of gas or a gallon of oil) could result in the contamination of soil and the loss of plant or animal life.

Response to Letter 66:

Comments noted.

Response to Letter 67:

67.1 Discussions with the county revealed that a typographical error was made in stating a 140 letters of comment were received. There were approximately 40 letters of comment received.

67.2 The items listed 1 to 5 are representative of the viewpoints expressed in the form letter. Letter 26 is a sample of the form letter. A response has been prepared for each of the comments in the form letter.

Response to Letter 68:

Several of the actions contained within the plan are in response to issues identified by residents of the community of El Mirage. Now that the planning process has been completed, work will begin on development of the Management Area to resolve these issues. A tremendous amount of work remains to implement the actions contained in the plan, and it will result in changes that affect the residents, landowners, and recreationists alike.

The residents of El Mirage and other nearby communities will be consulted regarding future decisions affecting the Management Area and the zone of influence. The Management Area staff will also continue to listen and respond to the suggestions and concerns of the residents in the adjacent communities.

4. Written Comments

The written comments received regarding the draft Management Plan have been reproduced on the following pages. The letters have been reproduced exactly as they arrived, except for Letter 16 in which case the obscenities have been whitened out. The letters are arranged in the same sequence as the responses in section 3.

ROSALIE R. ALMAN
3442 CENTINELA AVE., APT. 16
LOS ANGELES, CA 90066
(213) 391-5001
213-398-3396

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
90 MAY -3 AM 11:40
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

United States Dept. of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resoource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, California 92311-3221

8340.A (El Mirage) (CA-068.60)

I am the owner of a 2½ acre parcel in the El Mirage Area. I have also sold some property to other owners, and they are calling me to see how they will get paid, they atre very upset over the thought and possib ility of losing their property.

I sold property of mine in that area some couple yeaRS AGO. One owner is thinking of letting his property go to foreclosure they are so unhappy. How could I resell it again if they do, because No one wants to buy now that they hear that the government is buying it.

When do you expect to purchase property out there? 1.1

In 1988, we sold several 10 acre parcels for $L5,000.00 EACH and 2½ acres for $5,000 and $6,ooo.

Please Advise

100 Rosallie R. Alman

2

Presentation to the Bureau of Land Management concerning the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area draft plan

March 31, 1990

Additions to the draft plan

Goal: To provide a safe and enjoyable location for a wide variety of activities.

To minimize conflicts between various user groups with as few restrictions as possible.

Problem: Irresponsible users, conflicting activities

Proposed solution:

1. Designated quiet area on the west end of lake surface to include approximately 6% of the total area of the final project. Activities allowed in this area would include landsailing, model planes and cars, mountain bike riding, quiet camping, relaxing, spectating and other compatible activities.

   A. Motor vehicles use within this area would be restricted to within 100 feet of the shoreline and to a speed of 15 mph. 2.1

   B. This quiet area would provide a noise buffer zone for residents living along the west shore of the lake.

   C. This area should be clearly marked with removable signs to allow full use of the lake surface for special permitted activities such as time trials or commercial filming.

2. The following rule would be included and enforced throughout the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area:

   Drinking alcohol and driving/piloting a motor vehicle, landyacht or aircraft will not be permitted and is subject to fine and expulsion from the area.

Nord Embroden
Director

American Landsailing Federation
P.O. Box 99, Pinon Hills, Ca 92372
(619) 868-4484

3

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
90 MAY 16 PM 1:27
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

ANDEN
The Anden Group

1932 DEERE AVENUE, SUITE 200
SANTA ANA, CA 92705

P O BOX 4097
BALBOA, CA 92661

Tel. (714) 252-0200
Fax (714) 252-0404

R90-0034

May 10, 1990

United States Dept. of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311-3221

Subject: 8340.A (El Mirage)
(CA-068.60)

Gentlemen:

With regards to the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area, and your recent letter of March, what do you mean by "Inholding" Area? Why are there no time frames for acquisition? 3.1

Please send me a copy of the draft Management Plan.

Sincerely,

THE ANDEN GROUP

Michael O'Rourke
Vice President

MOR/rs

4

FONTANA, CA
APRIL 18, 1990

RECEIVED
90 APR 19 PM 0:00

BLM
MR. MARK DAVIS

Dear Sir:

I HAVE TWO PARCEL IN THE EL MIRAGE DEVELOPMENT;
APN 458-075-05 2½ ACRE &
APN 458-063-01 15 ACRE
I WOULD LIKE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE 1ST PHASE FOR BOTH.
BY THE WAY I'm IN ACCORD WITH WHAT YOU ARE DOING, SEEMS TO ME IT'S BEING WELL PLANNED, & THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR SUCH A DEVELOPMENT.
SO THANKS

Frank R Arellanes
1-714-822 9273

FRANK ARELLANES
16364 VALLEY BLVD.
FONTANA, CA. 92335

5

BLM Barstow Resource Area Office
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

RECEIVED

3/15/90

I have been camping and trailriding around El Mirage for over 20 years, and the "El Mirage Cooperative Management Area" plan would fence out most of the best public land in the area suitable for family camping and trailriding. It is obviously designed primarily to control use, not to provide the best user environment. 5.1

The largest single green-sticker grant (after resource management administrative costs) made by the OHV commission last year was given to the BLM's El Mirage project. Although funded entirely by green sticker fees, the EMCMA plan heavily favors high-speed car runs (on the lakebed), sand sailers, autogyros and other users who do not pay green sticker fees. 5.2

Most of the private property located within the proposed EMCMA, which the BLM intends to buy for $1.75 million, is good for nothing, including camping and trailriding; while most of the public land outside the fence is suitable only for camping and trailriding. 5.3

The fence would be an insult to free Americans. Without a fence, the number of people who visit El Mirage is too small to justify the proposed expenditure; with a fence, the number would be even smaller, and therefore even less justification to spend so much money. 5.4

The BLM's EMCMA plan is a blatant misuse of green sticker fees and a crushing disappointment to all OHV enthusiasts.

Winston Beaumont

Winston Beaumont
5260 East Canyon Drive
PO Box 113
Wrightwood, CA 92397
(619) 249-3428

6

21125 73rd Street
California City, CA 93505
March 14, 1990

RECEIVED

U. S Dept of the Interior
BLM-Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311-3221

Attn: Area Manager: RE: 8340.A (El Mirage)(CA-068660)

Dear Sir:

We have your letter of March 1 received last week, regarding prospective recreational area in the area of El Mirage, where we own five acres of land. We have had a number of offers to buy our land, but they have all been under the figure we paid for it, so we have not considered it; but we are interested in selling, as we are both in our senior years, and would like to dispose of such holdings.

You say San Bernardino County will acquire the land. Will they be contacting us, or do we need to write them? We were not included in the landowner survey of several years back, and we do not know what is considered a fair market value. Where do we get this information? In order to comment on the draft Management Plan, we would need a copy of the Plan. 6.1 6.2

Our main concern is disposing of the property at a fair price, rather than concern as to the future use of said land.

Mrs. Beck now resides in Oregon. I will not be able to attend either of the meetings listed in your letter. If the El Mirage date of 3/31 were any other date, I could attend. What we know of the project, we would support such a recreational area project. Just looking at your map, it appears that our 5 acres is withing the boundary.

Please advise what further we need to do. If you wish to contact me by phone my number is (619) 373-4665. I keep in touch with Mrs. Beck, who is my sister. May we please hear further from you or an assistant.

Yours very truly,

Wilfred S. Wilkie

Wilfred S. Wilkie, and for Lucile J. Beck

7

May 11, 1989

1089

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
1989 MAY 15 AM 10 53
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA.

Kay (Hallman) Beckman
16755 Union
Victorville, Ca. 92392
phone 619-243-4637

BLM Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, Ca. 92311

Dear Sirs:

I own land near the proposed boundaries of the El Mirage State Park. I am in favor of such a move for that area.

I understand a final version of the plan for the park is scheduled for release in May.

Please send me a copy of that plan.

Sincerely,

Kay Beckman

Kay Beckman

8

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAY -3 AM 11: 40
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

To: Mark Davis
BLM Barstow

From: Chuck Bell
P. O. Box 193
Lucerne Valley, Ca. 92356
619 248 9767

C. Bell

Date: 5/1/90

Subject: El Mirage Mgt. Plan

The Plan seems to incorporate all of the elements orginally intended. Good job.

My only substantative comment relates to the accomodation of non-motorized vehicles. Interim plan phases should be implemented in such a manner so as to not preclude the potential option of separating non-motorized vehicles (ie: land sailers) from motorized activity. The 'zoning' of certain uses may not be a popular notion at the present time, but may be necessary in the future if use of the plan area increases. 8.1

103

9

FRED F. BERGER
P. O. BOX 131
ETHEL, LOUISIANA 70730

RECEIVED

March 14, 1990

Area Manager

Bureau of Land Management

150 Cool Water Lane

Barstow, CA 92311-3221

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of your communication of March 1, 1990. You casually mentioned the government is going to exercise the Right of Imminent Domain to acquire several pieces of my property within your proposed recreational area. You further state that this is being done in order that the people of Los Angeles and southern California may be able to tear up the desert with motorcycles This is being done in the name of recreation. My property has already been scarred by these "idiots."

I would particularly draw your attention to two parcels I own. They are: Parcel #45806230 and Parcel #45806254. They are located in Section 9, 6N, 6W. An estimate of the above ground tonage of limestone on these two parcels amounts to 7 65 million tons. This is not taking account of the below surface volume of this material. That of course will have to be determined by core drilling but limestone is now selling for about $1.30 per ton in place. You can see that the potential value of this property is close to one billion dollars. I suggest you find a way to save it from the motorcycle demons.

9.1

I trust I will be hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Fred Berger

Fred Berger

104

10

April 28, 1990

Mark H. Davis
Project Manager, El Mirage Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

Dear Mark:

Please accept this letter in comment on the draft management plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. I would like to register my support of the BLM's efforts in compiling this compromise use agreement between user groups and the community.

I feel this plan balances the interests of various user groups and answers my interest as a recreational user of the dry lake and surrounding area.

I appreciate the effort which the Barstow Area office has invested in formulation of this plan with the community and other users. I continue to support BLM's efforts toward final plan acceptance and implementation.

Sincerely,

John Brickner

1845 E. Avenue R-11
Palmdale, CA 93550

11

G.W.Burnett
P.O.Box 901269
Palmdale,CA. 93590
805-273-4005

April 23,1990

Alden Sievers, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow,CA. 92311-3221
Dear Mr. Sievers

I am a property owner in the El Mirage Area and I am writing this letter to explain why I oppose the Draft Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area.

I started buying property in the El Mirage Area in 1979 and have been going to the area to sell the property for the past ten years. In that length of time I have seen a lot transpire.

The Federal Government owns approximately 12,000 acres in this area. This property has been used by Off-road Vehicles for many years. This property includes EL Mirage Dry Lake. I have enclosed maps for your reference. As you can see by the General Area Map this area is not out in the middle of " No-Where". It is surronded by Adelanto, Victorville, Apple Valley and Hesperia. It is 35 minutes from Palmdale and Lancaster. Minutes from Hi-Way 395 and Interstate 15. This growth area will be similar to Orange County 40 years ago and SAn Fernando Valley 30 years ago. Therewill be 2 million people in this valley in the future. Many of the people who purchased land in this area, did so with the intention of retiring there. These people are far-sighted people who save their money, pay their taxes, invest their money and plan on the future. This is the kind of person we want in our communities. 11.1

BLM does not want people like this in the area. They want to accquire another 12,000 acres by any means possible, including EMINENT DOMAIN. BLM states that over 100,000 people, a year use the existing facility. As I stated I have been going to the area for the past ten years. During the week, Mon thru Fri. You might see 8 or 10 people using the facility. This means that 2000 people would have to use this facility on Sat. and Sun. of each and every week in order to equal the over 100,000 figure reported by the BLM. The approximate number of people at the facility on the week-end is about 400,,this totals on a yearly 11.2

basis around 20,000. Many of these same people repeat, therefore we are probably talking about 12,000 acres being used by 5,000. BLM wants to increase this acreage to 25,000 acres. This would amount to 5 acres per person to play on during week-ends. The people who use this facility are mostly young. Teen-agers and under. I have talked to quite a few of these kids and have found they do not want to be fenced in and regulated as proposed. They are also against the extra fee,they would be charged, in addition to their Green Sticker fee. It is my opinion they will go elsewhere, probably east of Barstow,CA. to do their riding. Someplace where they are not regulated and not required to pay a fee. The whole project appears to be a Financial Fiasco! 11.3

Speaking of financing- TheBLM has outlined projected spending on the project for the next five years. Pages 61,62,63, and 64 of one-half inch thick manual entitled Draft Management Plan for El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. The first management that should have been done would have been to reduce the size of the manual and save the Tax Payers some money. One example in spending (projected) 3 million dollars for aerial photos. Ridiculous! The total projected spending over the next five years is $484,450,000. This figure is obtained from totaling the W column on pages 62,63,and 64 of the manual.This figure does not include the projected cost of the inholding land to be purchased 6-10 years from now. With progressive inflated costs we are talking in excess of one-half BILLION DOLLARS in the next five years. Want to buy some stock? I dont.97 of all small business go broke. The reason? Lack of experience. When any branch of the Government goes into business it is Scarry.Three Billion Deficit tract record should be conclusive proof. The burden of operational deficit costs will revert to the Tax Payers. Rather an expensive recreation plan. Paid for by all the people and used by so few. I can think of so many good things this money could be used for. 11.4

Like Palmdale and Lancaster, El Mirage will become a bed-room for greater Los Angeles. The need for millions of young people is housing that they can afford. In order to obtain this they have to commute to out-laying communities. The El Mirage playground will be right in the middle of vast housing. The air pollution, the noise factor and many other draw-backs will exist. The facility will have to be moved as in the past. The Bikers were in Palmdale,Lancaster, Lake Los Angeles,Palm Springs and many other locations. Development of housing and bussines demanded their move. It will happen here too. The property (if accquired by BLM) will be sold to private enterprise for proper development. The purchaser's will be huge corporations, again leaving the little guy out in the cold. 11.5

I have enclosed a map listing the land tracts and showing their locations. There are approximately 675 2.5 acre parcels in these tracts. The upper tracts #s 8169, 8070, and 8071 have beautiful views. Six months out of the year you can see snow covered SAN GAERIEL MTS. You can see the green valley below in the summertime. From the upper No-East corner the Adelanto Area and Hi-Way 395 is visible. Every person I have shown,says the same thing-What a beautilul view! It is a crime to take view land like this and not use it for what it was meant to be.

These tracts were manufactured in 1969-1970-1971. The tracts have been surveyed, the roads have been cut and named. The San Bernardino Drainage Easements have been installed as required by San Bernardino County to guard against flash flooding. All have been mapped and recorded. This cost todaywould be considerbly more than it was then. It used to cost a property owner about $4800.00 to subdivide 10 acres into four 2.5 acre parcels. The Supervisors of San Bernardino Co. have approved increased infrastructure requirements that will raise costs to about $34,450.00 That works out to $8,635.00 for creating each 2.5 acre parcel, excluding the cost of the land. Any 2.5 acre parcel manufactured at present costs, will have to be sold for $20,000.00 to $25,000.00 unimproved. Many of the land owners that bought at a lower price could not afford the increase.

There are so many negatives against this plan I hope the people in authority regonize this. Yesterday, while watching Earth Day and seeing how hard millions of people are trying to improve our water and air, I thought how ironic that other factors are trying their best to pollute our air and tear up our terrain. A demand is being made by the land owners in this area to have an independent Environmental Impact Report (EIR) filed. 11.6

Respectfully yours,

George W. Burnett

George W. Burnett

12

Jim & Joy Burton
P.O. Box 1536
Newport, OR 97365
(503) 265-6869

4-10-90

Hello,

We understand you may be interested in buying land in El Mirage. We own the parcel listed below: 2½ ac Lot 186 Tract 8070 - S.B. map 12/2/69 BR 105 pgs 45-68.

If interested, please contact us -

Thankyou,

Joy Burton

13

611 Ac Anthony
Pegahum, CA

RECEIVED
90 APR 16 AM 8 30

April 12, 1990

Barstow Area Manager
B L M
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

Sir

My wife and I attended the Public Meeting in El Mirage on March 31. It was a well managed and informative session.

We and our partner are in agreement that a plan is necessary to manage this area. While we have not studied this Plan in its entirety, it appears to cover all of the problem areas.

This letter is also to advise you that we are willing to be considered in the first acquisition phase of private property. 13.1

We look forward to hearing from you regarding the ongoing progress of your Management Plan and its implementation

Sincerely,

Theodore L Byers Jr

INC: Legal Description

14

G. K. CALLAWAY & SONS

Racing

110 South Brighton Street
Burbank, Calif. 91506
818-841-3964 or 848-0433

April 12, 1990

Mark Davis
BLM Barstow Resource Area Office
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow CA 92311

Dear Mark:

I was an attendee at both of your El Mirage Management Draft meetings, and want to commend you on the way you conducted the meetings and yourself. As you are learning, you have a very tough job. I fully understand what you are trying to do. We need a place for everyone's recreation. It was quite obvious that you, Brad and all the other BLM staff have worked very hard to put together the best possible plan.

I'm for the fence on the south and on the north, to keep the troublemakers out of the residential area. I also feel that the OHV rider/drivers should be cited if caught riding outside these boundaries. I would like to see private landowners who do not want to sell, be able to keep their property, however, and lease it to the "park." Then, if they do not want free access for OHV, they have the option of fencing their land. I'm fortunate in that my 40 acres in the proposed park are fenced and somewhat "out of the way." 14.1

To keep out the land speculators and prevent commercialization of the area, I would suggest that the entire area be kept "open," and zoned for recreational use only. I would also like to see all or at least most glass containers kept out of the park and would never want to see a convenience store in the park, selling alcoholic beverages. A large part of the present problem in the El Mirage community is people riding down to Murphy's and the Lazy C Cafe. I do not want booze outlawed, just made inconvenient to acquire. 14.2 14.3

I have a policy with my OHV riding group: when the booze comes out, we park our wheels. Drinking and riding/driving do not mix. Accidents can occur out there without drinking to help them along.

In closing, I would like to restate that I am for some form of control, and if we do not control ourselves, it will be done for us by the extremists among the otherwise rational environmentalists. They would have us throwing out the baby with the bathwater!

It is not a simple situation when it comes to land acquisition. The subject will always be a bone of contention because any solution will never please everyone. It appeared to me that this past Saturday, all I saw at El Mirage was greedy landowners, trying to stop the park "deal," and get rich via developers.

As I stated at Saturday's meeting, I want to be included on all mailing lists pertaining to El Mirage. I have asked the "locals" for an application to join the EMIA. I bought my property, not looking at the long range financial gain, but for a place to locate a mobile home and workshop and to be able to take out my toys and play. It's only a weekender place now, but in three to four years, I'll be moving out there full-time. Because of my interest in SCTA and CORE, the desert around El Mirage is perfect. Just as important to me, however, is the protection of this area for the enjoyment of the majority of those who frequent it.

George K. Callaway
GEORGE K. CALLAWAY

PS: If you ever need someone for a committee, you need only call or write.

15

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
90 MAY 21 PM 12:20
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

Kuo Chen Mei Wang
91-6600 Lucas Road
Richmond B.C. V7C 4T1

May 13, 1990

United States Dept. of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, California 92311-3221

Re: Parcel No. 460-021-04
Parcel No. 489-131-53

Gentlemen:

My parents bought the above parcels many many years ago.

My father passed away three years ago. The land was registered in joint names. Can my mother sell the land now that my father had passed away ? Any legal procedure she should go through ? Please advise by return mail. She is willing to sell at market price. 15.1

Looking forward to your early reply.

Yours truly,

Jeanne Chang

Jeanne ~~Chang~~
(daughter of Mr & Mrs. Wang)

16

BLM,

I am opposed to the idea of fencing off the El Mirage dry lake bed. It is an open area free for all americans to enjoy. Fencing is a stupid idea, and nothing is being harmed by the recreational activities taking place there because there is nothing to be harmed. There is not one living thing there that affects man. Fencing it off is just another one of your stupid ideas. All you-BLM people should each other up the and worry about aids, a real problem.

17

THE consolidated COMPANIES

JACK HALL, SR • DISTRICT MANAGER • P.O. BOX 758 PALMDALE CALIFORNIA 93550 • TELEPHONE (805) 947-9961

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
'90 APR 23 AM 12:22
BARSTOW, CA

Bureau Of Land Managment
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, Ca. 92311-3221

April 2p,1990

Re: Draft of Management Plan
El Mirage, California. Dated 3/90

Gentlemen:

Our Company has considerable interests in the area of your Draft Management Plan. Both in the northern area and western area; therefor we are greatly interested in what goes on around us.

The Plan you have drafted makes the best use of the land in this area. We would like to see a Recreational Hall and a Childrens play area added to your plan in the future. 17.1

Without reservation, we approve the Plan of Management.

Please call upon us if we can assist you in any way.

Your Very Truly,

Jack Hall Jr.
Jack Hall Sr.- President

C.W. Miller
C.W. Miller- Secretary

110

18

CORVA
CALIFORNIA OFF ROAD VEHICLE ASSOCIATION, INC.

April 30, 1990

BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
'90 MAY -2 PM 12:49
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

Mr Sieven,

After reviewing the draft Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area, I discover there are no provisions for competitive motorcycle/ATV events. I mean specifically Hare and Hounds, Hare Scrambles, European Scrambles and Motocross events. 18.1

Because of the loss of competition areas such as Fremont Valley and the Rand Mountains and the lack of Motocross parks, I feel the decision to preclude these events should be changed to allow them.

Sincerely,
Ken Carpenter
Vice President
CORVA

Ken Carpenter
P.O. Box 2832
B & Beaumont, CA 92314 714 5842155

19

Rt. 1, Box 197
Moyock, NC 27958

April 24, 1990

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 APR 30 AM 11: 18
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

Area Manager
U.S. Dept. of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311-3221

RE: 8340.A (El Mirage)
(CA-068.60)

Dear Sir:

We are responding to a letter of March 1,1990 with respect to our property in the El Mirage Lake Area.

In as much as we were not included in the survey purported to have been conducted "several years ago by the BLM" we would like to go on the record as opposing the forced acquisition of our property. This land was purchased while we resided in California for our retirement some 25 years in the future so "fair market value" now hardly compensates for it's loss. Nor does it begin to scratch the surface of compensation. A more equitable arrangement for us would be for the "El Mirage Coop." to exhange our parcel for a like-sized and situated parcel on the perimeter of the "park" thereby diminishing the financial loss inflicted on us. It's a real estate agent's dream being devised by your "Cooperative" group since there will certainly be an inflation of prices for the property next to the "park". 19.1

We do not appreciate threats of eminent domain especially since we are not discussing the development of any type of vital service or facility i.e. school, hospital, water, etc., but rather the despoiling of up to 24,000 acreas by off-road vehicles and the attendant hordes, not to mention the pollution of the air. Nor do we feel it of vital necessity for us to give up our property and the right to sell when and to whom we desire in the interest of providing cheap background for movies/TV or livestock grazing. Your action has effectively condemned our property and will preclude us from selling to anyone else with this foreclosure hanging uncertainly in the future. 19.2

It is certainly ironic that the environment is of uppermost concern except when it comes to special interest groups. There was just a nationwide celebration of "Earth Day". Your response, as well as the counties of Los Angeles & San Bernardine and the Parks & Recreation Dept. is to create a "park" that will irreparably destroy and damage the desert ecosystem existing and effectively prevent any improvement in the future. We will continue to resist this intrusion and present our position to environmentally concerned individuals and groups. 19.3

Regards,
Edward E. Crews
Edward E. Crews

cc: Ralph Nader
Tom Lovejoy, Smithsonian Institute

20

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 APR 12 AM 8 00
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA.

April 6, 1990

RE: Acquimition of El Mirage Property
N 1/2 of S 1/2 of NW 1/4 Section 33 Township 7 North Range 7 West San Bernardino Base & Meridian
APN 461-084-03

In regard to your planned acquisition of property in the El Mirage area, we own forty acres located as described above. We are interested in selling our parcel during the firmt phase of your acquimition plan.

Please contact us as firmt phase begins at 1200 Quail Street, Ste 175 Newport Beach, CA 92660 or 22526 Campos, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 or 714 476-1026 Work or 714 458-6432 Home.

We look forward to hearing from you and encourage you in your plans for a recreational facility that im much needed.

P.S. I attended your meeting in El Mirage and felt you covered a great deal of information and presented it well. If 200 people dimapprove and the remaining 900 apparently dont care either way or are all for it, whatever the case majority and necessity are an important factor in determining the outcome. I am in support of your idea!

Thank you for your prompt response when the time is right!

VIOLA OR BOB CROOKS
Viola or Bob Crooks

21

RE: El Mirage Cooperative Management Area

RECEIVED
1990 APR 19 AM 8 00

Dear Sirs

I am Recreational OHV user, and I am opposed to any restrictions regarding access and/or usage of the El Mirage Dry Lake Area.

Larry Cual
19752 Ellicott Lane
Huntington Beach CA
92646

Larry Cual

112

22

RECEIVED
1990 APR 13 AM 8 00

Crestline Soaring Society Inc.
P.O. Box 1628
San Bernardino, CA 92402
April 12, 1990

Alden Sievers
BLM Barstow Resource Area Office
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

Dear Mr. Sievers

The Crestline Soaring Society Inc. has recently become aware of your efforts to promote general recreation in the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. We are also aware that the list of recreational activities includes hang gliding.

The El Mirage area is considered one of the best areas in Southern California for hang gliding. The Crestline Soaring Society Inc. strongly supports the establishment of hang gliding as a recognized recreational activity at El Mirage.

The Crestline Soaring Society Inc. is responsible for the management of hang gliding in the San Bernardino Mtn launch site overlooking Devil's Canyon and represents many of the 1600 Southern California hang glider pilots.

Sincerely,

Robert McKenzie,
(President) Crestline Soaring Society Inc.

23

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAY 17 AM 11:50
BARSTOW, CA

May 4, 1990

Letter to Mark Davis, BLM, RE: Off Road Recreation Vehicle Park

Having been involved with the El Mirage off-road vehicle park since it's inception and having seen and appreciated the time, money and effort into this project I do feel that our communication on this proposed park from the El Mirage community to you is necessary.

Looking back to the 1980 period, Jim Livermore, (a member of the state offroad commission) did attend one of the local e.m.i.a. (El Improvement Association) meetings where he did suggest an off-highway state park - from there and through the preliminary meetings, a concept of a recreational park was formed.

In the following years since, and fully documented, there has been a tremendous amount of time consumed by BLM; offroad vehicle groups; sandsailors, So. CA. timing Assn; assorted recreational clubs and local residents to assemble a plan that would, if possible, fit the needs of all.

The local residents of El Mirage and nearby Shadow Mountain, while not original draftees, of this park concept, did feel that they could participate in the formation of this park to help their local offroad vehicle problems and also help solve recreational concerns from congested city areas.

As the program progressed through the years, and the interim management took over with a grant from the "Green Sticker Funds," recreational use has dropped.

With it, and probably also because of the enforcement factor of the BLM, overall problems within the communities relating to offroad vehicle use has dimished.

So, in my canvasing of the local residents and organizations, I have not received the same enthusiam that I had in years past - relating to "how soon we forget" - this is a normal reaction - I hope!
Generally speaking, with regards to a fair and equitable solution to the inholding owners of property within the park, I feel that this is a viable project and it has the overall support of the local communities.

Paul Davis

HCR 10 Box 106A
El Mirage Route
Adelanto, Ca. 92301

24

Department of Water and Power the City of Los Angeles

TOM BRADLEY
Mayor

Commission
RICK J. CARUSO, *President*
JACK W. LEENEY, *Vice President*
ANGEL M. ECHEVARRIA
CAROL WHEELER
WALTER A. ZELMAN
JUDITH K. DAVISON, *Secretary*

NORMAN E. NICHOLS, *General Manager and Chief Engineer*
ELDON A. COTTON, *Assistant General Manager - Power*
DUANE L. GEORGESON, *Assistant General Manager - Water*
DANIEL W. WATERS, *Assistant General Manager - External Affairs*
NORMAN J. POWERS, *Chief Financial Officer*

April 30, 1990

Mr. Alden Seivers
Barstow Area Manager
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, California 92311-3221

Dear Mr. Seivers:

Draft El Mirage Management Plan (Plan)
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP)

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft Plan. After reading the draft Plan, DWP has the following comments to offer:

1. Utility rights-of-way - The draft Plan states, "All existing rights-of-way within the Management Area will be recognized" (p. 22, item 7). We recommend that the words "and the zone of influence" be inserted after "Management Area" in this sentence. 24.1

2. Mead-Adelanto Transmission Project - Appendix A, Resource Data, correctly states that Energy Production and Utility Corridor "P", activated by the Mead-Adelanto Transmission Project, runs along Highway 395 through the eastern part of the Management Area (p. 15). BLM's acquisition plans, as stated in the draft Plan, do not appear to conflict with utility corridor P. However, our Real Estate Division would like to be kept informed on your acquisition efforts at the following address: 24.2

   Real Estate Division
   Los Angeles Department of
   Water and Power
   P.O. Box 111, Room 1203
   Los Angeles, California 90051-0100

111 North Hope Street, Los Angeles, California ☐ *Mailing address:* Box 111, Los Angeles 90051-0100
Telephone (213) 481-4211 *Cable address:* DEWAPOLA *FAX* (213) 481-8701

25

RECEIVED

March 15, 1990

Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, California 92311-3221

Gentlemen:

I live in Glendale, Arizona, own property in the vicinity that will be discussed on March 29 or March 31, and do not have ready access to the public meetings. I would like to have a copy of the draft Management Plan.

I own 5 acres in Section 19 of the plat plan, and have owned it since 1971. There is a possibility of my interest in your offer as stated, "Private land will be acquired in a cash transaction for full market value," and as "purchase from willing landowner."

You may contact me any time in the future when you are proceeding with your plans. My address and telephone numbers are as follows:

Oran and Audrey Duncan
7303 North 47th Avenue
Glendale, Arizona 85301
Home: (602) 934-1614
Office: (602) 242-2246

Please be in touch with me as your plans develop.

Sincerely,

Oran E. Duncan

EL MIRAGE LANDOWNERS 26

MAILING ADDRESS
3151 CAHUENGA BOULEVARD WEST, SUITE 340
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90068

April 11, 1990

Dear

This letter is written in opposition to the Draft Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. The Plan is costly, ill-conceived, self-serving, illogical in its conclusions, negligent in its absence of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), an infringement of property rights, and by its own admission (page 41), lacking in provisions for controlling unauthorized trespass and OHMV disturbances in the communities surrounding the Park - the purported reason for "needed" action.

The signatory agencies to the proposed Plan are urged to carefully review the following points and to withdraw their support from this boondoggle.

1. Although there are 1100 private land owners in the affected area, they received no representation on the planning committee. 26.1

2. BLM states that 100 letters were sent to survey the opinions of property owners. Why weren't the other 1000 owners polled? Is it BLM policy not to warn sacrificial lambs? What was the percentage of returned responses? What information was given out and what questions were asked? 26.2

3. The Draft Plan is an audacious abuse of the power of eminent domain. It requires the forced sale of 12,000 acres of private land - half the amount of the total project. The majority of property owners purchased land (and paid taxes) with dreams of a retirement home or of a long term investment for their "golden years". Why should they be forced to give up their dreams to create a "Disneyland for Bikers" and a playground for Wet Mud enthusiasts? Why should the illegal actions of lawbreakers be rewarded at the expense of good citizens? What has happened to the rights of the "little guy" in America? BLM has even devised 7 guidelines including fees for issuing keys to private land owners whose ingress and egress to their property will be blocked. Outrageous! 26.3

4. San Bernardino County will serve as the Appraiser and the Purchaser This "vested interest" arrangement pretends to offer Fair Market Value! And of course, eminent domain precludes payment of future profits. If forced to sell, where does the "little guy" reinvest - Beverly Hills? If the Park fails to materialize or is forced to close, does the government re-sell the land for profit to private developers? 26.4

5. El Mirage property owners insist that an indepedent EIR be filed. The environmental assessment conducted by the BLM is reminiscent of the "fox guarding the hen house". Intensive OHMV use will cause land scars and destruction of plant vegetation, wild life and their habitats. The desert tortoise, an endangered species, and the Mohave ground squirrel, a threatened species, are of special concern. The Draft Plan correctly states that these populations are NOT compatible with the Management Area. Air pollution created by dust clouds and vehicle emissions will increase - as will air traffic and noise levels. 26.5

6. The total cost of this disastrous project has not been accurately tabulated. Estimates should include cost of lawsuits filed by private land owners challenging appraisals and compensation sought by Park visitors for claims of accidental death or injury on government land. Perhaps the exorbitant fee of 3 million dollars for aerial photos should be set aside to help defray the cost of constant litigation. 26.6

7. In conclusion, one can sympathize with the local residents who are experiencing problems with OHMV users. However, if the Park is successful, it will attract a greater number of perpetrators to the area - thus increasing the incidents of vandalism, trespass, litter, noise and theft. Several recreational riders stated at the March 31st public meeting that OHMV users would not frequent a regulated area. They were opposed to paying entrance fees in addition to Green Sticker fees. They were not interested in driving their vehicles in a fenced in straight run. What provisions for control have been made to prevent the scores of OHMV users from trespassing on the open available land surrounding the Management Area and Zone of Influence? The answer is NONE. The BLM has not solved the trespass problem. They've just relocated it at the expense of 1100 private land owners! 26.7

ref: DSK4:41090.L02[20,21]

Therefore we support Alternate Plan B of the Draft Plan (No Action) and strongly urge the signatory Agencies to work with the CHP and County Sheriff in law enforcement until a more realistic, equitable solution can be found.

Sincerely,

27

JAMES E. FARMER
6501 SANTA FE AVE.
HUNTINGTON PARK, CALIF. 90255
U. S. A.

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 APR 24 AM 11:26
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

April 21, 1990

Mr. Alden Sievers, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311-3221

Dear Mr. Sievers:

To supplement briefly the attached letter of objections voiced by many EMCMA landowners (of which by now you are well aware), I want to urge on your agency a serious reconsideration of the proposed Plan before signing to put in action such an unmanageable undertaking. Here are some of the major weaknesses you should consider:

1. COST: We searched in vain in the document any allocation or for sources of funding available and ready for the over-all operation of the project. It is one thing to state the amounts needed (which, incidentally, neglected total fencing of the area) and quite another to be able to guarantee necessary funding. This is a major flaw in the proposal. No one should be foolish enough to start a project without first knowing they can finish it. (Does this sound familiar?) 27.1

2. AREA TOO VAST: Can any of your agencies point to a successful undertaking of this kind and of this magnitude? We think not. Leaving aside the many co-operative efforts and agreements needed to coordinate this undertaking, the successful management of the area proposed requires more money and personnel than is economically feasible for the objective envisioned. Result: Government agencies taking the place of Irresponsible LAND DEVELOPERS. Twelve thousand acres of public land in the proscribed area is more than enough to manage and to begin the project. 27.2

3. RIGHTS OF OWNERS BELITTLED: Government is supposed to represent rights and interests of all the people. In this Plan property owners were not part of the process, and absentee ownership considered disinterested and negligent by those making the rules and laying boundries. Free enterprise should be encouraged. Land ownership is a fundamental right and should be protected. 27.3

116

JAMES E. FARMER
6501 SANTA FE AVE.
HUNTINGTON PARK, CALIF. 90255
U. S. A.

Much more could be said to support the premise that the Draft Management Plan is ill-advised. I hope and pray your agency will not make the rash error of consenting to this ill-conceived plan.

Very truly yours,

James E. Farmer

28

FILM PERMITS UNLIMITED INC.
14105 Burton Street
Van Nuys, CA. 91402

4/27/90

To whom it may concern,

My name is Denise Wheeler, of Film Permits Unlimited Inc. I have been in the film industry for over twenty years. I have used the dry lake beds on numerous occasions.

The dry lake bed El Mirage is of vital importance to the hollywood film industry. It has ample space for scalfolding sets and a wonderful background for still photography. It has the versatility that every director is looking for.

The Management Plan has fully recognized the need and importande of this dry lake bed to the film industry. I feel that they have come up with the perfect solution to better satisfy not only our needs, but your needs as well. These dry lake beds are not only benificial to the film companys, but they also bring a nice revenue to the Bureau of Land Management.

If the access to El Mirage is taken away, it would deep_y hender the hollywood film industry and prevent many companys frdm experiencing the wonders of El Mirage.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would take what I have said into consideration. I would also just like to say that I whole heartedly support the Management PLan and I will do everything hamanly possible to keep El Mirage available for filming. 28.1

I do hope all matters can be resolved as quickly as possible. I can't stress to you enough the importance of the Management Plan and their involvement with El Mirage.

Sincerely yours,

Denise Wheeler

Denise Wheeler
President

29

FORESTRY AND FIRE WARDEN DEPARTMENT
3800 Sierra Way • San Bernardino, CA 92405-2399 • (714) 882-1222
DAVID J. DRISCOLL, Chief

COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY
FLOYD TIDWELL, Director
FIRE WARDEN
EMERGENCY SERVICES
SHERIFF

April 20, 1990

Mark Davis, Project Manager
CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

RE: BLM/San Bernardino County Fire Department Coordination
El Mirage Park Project

Dear Mr. Davis:

Attached is our response to the El Mirage Park project.

As you know, it is imperative that we coordinate our efforts in order to mitigate the negative fiscal impacts upon the El Mirage CDF/San Bernardino County Fire Department operation that will arise from the formation and operation of the proposed El Mirage Park.

We look forward to working with you to insure that the park user and local residents receive the most efficient and cost-effective emergency services available.

29.1

Sincerely,

DAVID J. DRISCOLL,
Chief

DJD:bas

Attachment

c: Battalion 9
3880

118

As you know, El Mirage is located in the Northwest corner of the West Desert Battalion. Currently, it is rather isolated from any other communities in the area, with Phelan and Adelanto being closest at from 9 - 12 miles away.

Current population of the El Mirage community is approximately 700 - 800 people, and is slowly on the rise. El Mirage, with its wide open spaces and remoteness, is attracting new investors at an increased rate. Agricultural based industry is attracted to the area and a new dairy is setting up shop. As per the locals, real estate transactions are on a steep increase and many people are looking to build homes and/or speculate on growth spurred by the park project.

Historically, one of the main attractions of the area has been the El Mirage Dry Lake. Summer and holiday weekends have proven to be very busy times for the local El Mirage and nearby Phelan fire crews. Some holiday weekends have seen the El Mirage and Phelan Crews spending most of their worktime at the dry lake handling emergency medical and fire incidents.

In the past, minimal, if any, authorized supervision was provided for all of the activities at the El Mirage Dry Lake. The El Mirage Dry Lake Recreational Park project, as proposed by BLM, will accomplish many things. Foremost is the securing, by fenceline, of the park perimeter to eliminate much of the past user/resident conflicts. BLM will patrol the park using law enforcement personnel, and the entire area is expected to evolve into a popular, family oriented recreation area. Once this becomes known, total use of the off road park facility, all the roads leading to the facility, and surrounding businesses in the El Mirage community will escalate. All of this increased activity will add more emergency and fire protection planning workload for the San Bernardino County Fire Department and its local El Mirage and Phelan fire stations. In addition, an estimated 25% of the land located in the existing El Mirage Fire Improvement Zone will be acquired by BLM to be included in the proposed park. Because the land within the fire improvement zone is assessed a per parcel dollar figure for fire protection, approximately 25% of the El Mirage tax revenue (1 year approximately $11,250.00 - 5 years approximately $56,250.00) will be lost to the formation of the off road park.

The impact of the proposed El Mirage Park will be as follows: loss of tax revenue to support the local fire protection system, and an increase in workload for the local fire department resources, both directly and indirectly.

BLM is assuming the lead role in forming this park. According to the El Mirage Dry Lake Project Manager, Mark Davis, the State of California is funding about 85% of the project because of its Green Sticker off road vehicle use registration program. The County of San Bernardino is involved because, at this time, BLM has no legal authority to collect entrant or user fees at the gate. However, the County can, and this money can be collected and be placed in an agency account to be returned to the project to fund its needs and the surrounding operations it impacts. BLM's county contacts are Mr. Messerly of County Parks and Mr. Kelly of Real Estate Services. The target date for the beginning of user fee collection is currently July 1991.

CDF has been informally approached by BLM to assist in installing approximately 40 miles of perimeter fencing around the park using Fenner wards. According to Mr. Mark Davis of BLM, once the operational contract is signed between BLM, the State of California, and the County of San Bernardino, the money will then be released to purchase the necessary land to complete the park.

Based upon the expected impact on local fire protection/EMS services, the following are recommended to offset loss of revenue and increase in fire department workload:

I. BLM to purchase new squad, fully equipped with specified rescue equipment, for the El Mirage Fire Station operated by the CDF/San Bernardino County Fire Department. (See attachment 'A')

II. BLM to provide funding to staff the El Mirage Fire Station during traditional and expected peak work load periods, (i.e.: holidays, weekends, and peak user periods). (See attachment "B")

III. BLM to provide replacement for current and future loss of tax revenuefor the El Mirage fire district on an annual basis.

15. Two 500 watt flood lights with 400' of cords
16. One - 20# dry chemical extinguisher
17. One - 30# class 'D' extinguisher
18. One - 2½ gallon pressurized water extinguisher
19. One - 25' tow chain
20. Two - 100' lifelines (1 3/4")
21. Two - LHRP shovels
22. Two McLeods
23. Two - Pulaski's
24. One - Fireman's Axe
25. Two - canteens (4 qt. capacity each)
26. One - Brush Hook
27. One - 8# Sledge hammer
28. Two - Rechargeable hand lanterns
29. Air Bag Rescue System

Projected cost 90/91: $36,000.00 for equipment

Total for fully equipped squad

$20,400.00	vehicle
$36,000.00	vehicle inventory
$56,400.00	Total 90/91 figures

ATTACHMENT 'A'

One each: Rescue Squad

Rescue squad would follow overall CDF/San Bernardino County Fire Department specifications for this type of vehicle:

1. One ton cab and chassis
2. "Tall enclosed service body with compartments
3. Big block motor with automatic transmiasion
4. Four wheel drive
5. As per CDF/San Bernardino County Fire Department FEM I (State/County Fleet Manager)

Projected estimated 91/92 cost: $21,500.00

Projected estimated 90/91 cost: $20,400.00

In addition, emergency equipment needed to meet projected needs brought about by increased lake bed and State/County road usage would include:

1. Power extrication device (Hurst Tool type)
2. RS - 10 extrication kit
3. Resuscitator
4. Four spare oxygen bottles
5. Trauma bag EMT-1a level
6. Five backboards
7. Burn kit
8. Two breathing apparatus (MSA)
9. Six spare breathing air bottles
10. Air Chisel
11. Mobile radio (minimum 80 channel)
12. Handi-talkie (minimum 80 channel)
13. Unitrol and light bar
14. Portable generator or built-in inverter

ATTACHMENT 'B'

Staffing should be augmented during traditional and predicted recreational use periods. In order of heaviest use, the months are listed:

20% of annual use - May

17% of annual use - November

10% of annual use - April

10% of annual use - June

10% of annual use - October

7% of annual use - March

6% of annual use - July

6% of annual use - September

The months of January, February, August, and December do not traditionally show much activity. Holiday weekends and ideal weather conditions seem to encourage recreational activity in the El Mirage lakebed area. In addition to the active times of the year, the activities themselves on the dry lake, as well as the increased use of local roads to and from the area, influences the local fire stations work load. Sixty five percent of the fire department emergency calls are medical aides, with another 10% traffic collisions. Most are recreational user oriented.

Annually, there is an average of 104 days a year that are weekend days. Of those, 37 days are active holiday weekend days while an additional 16 days fall within three of the most active months at the El Mirage Dry Lake area. These 53 active days require augmented staffing to minimize the impact on the local fire crew(s). 23 additional weekend days fall within the months of June, October, and March. Staffing help is needed during these medium activity levels as well.

BASIC DATA:

1.	New Years	Dec/Jan	(4 days)
	Lincolns Birthday	Feb	(4 days)
	Washingtons Birthday	Feb	(3 days)
	Easter	April	(3 days)
	Memorial Day	May	(3 days)
	Pre-4th of July	June 28-30	(3 days)
	July 4th + weekend	July 4 - 7	(4 days)
	Labor Day	September	(3 days)
	Columbus Day	October	(3 days)
	Veterans Day	November	(3 days)
	Thanksgiving	November	(4 days)

Total Holiday Weekend Days = 37

May	6 days
November	4 days
April	6 days

Total Active Non-holiday Weekend Days = 16

TOTAL "PEAK" DAYS = 53

June	8 days
October	6 days
March	9 days

Total additional active weekend days = 23

Summary:

53 days	(holiday weekend days)
23 days	(non-holiday active days)
104 days	(Total weekend days in a year)

Pay:

Paid Fire Captain	per hour :	$14.14	$24.85/hour
Paid Firefighter 2	per hour :	$10.71	
PCF Fire Captain	per hour :	$ 5.25	$10.00/hour
PCF F.A.E.	per hour :	$ 4.75	
Paid crew	24 hour shift :	$596.40	
	12 hour shift :	$298.20	
PCF crew	24 hour shift :	$240.00	
	12 hour shift :	$120.00	

Plan #1

Paid crew (FC, FF2) 24 hr. shifts, 104 days = $62,025.00/yr.

Plan #2

Paid crew during peak days - 24 hours	= 53 x $596.40	= $31,609.20
PCF crew during peak days - 24 hours	= 23 x $240.00	= $ 5,520.00
	Total	$37,129.20

Plan #3

Paid crew during 53 days (12 hr. shift)	= 53 x $298.20	= $15,804.60
PCF crew during 23 days (12 hr. shifts)	= 23 x $120.00	= $ 2,760.00
	Total	$18,564.60

Plan #4

Paid crew - 76 days - 12 hr. shift = $298.20 x 76 = $22,663.20

As you can see, numerous other staffing combinations are possible.

In summary, a large majority of our El Mirage Fire Station/Phelan Fire Station workload is directed towards the El Mirage Dry Lake recreational area. As the proposed park becomes a reality and public use of the park, the surrounding roadways, and the local businesses increase, the fire/EMS workload for our department will increase with it. Because of this, coupled with an anticipated direct loss of El Mirage Fire District tax revenue to form the park, positive measures must be taken by BLM to offset these substantial impacts.

c: 3500
B9

30

Bureau of Land Management

RECEIVED
MAR 27

March 26, 1990

Dear Sir:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 1 March concerning land ownership in the El Mirage/Shadow Mountain area.

I have ten acres located along the dry lake at T.7 N., R.7 W. My property is available for purchase at fair market value.

The planned park developement is long overdue and will serve well as a regional recreational facility that should please everyone concerned. In closing I wish to thank for your informative letter and look forward to finalization of this complex problem.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Gruber

Robert V. Gruber

31

R.H. Hellmann,
58, New Cavendish St.,
London, W1M 7LE

13th March, 1990

RECEIVED
1990 MAR 22 AM 8 00
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA

Bureau of Land Management,
Barstow Resource Area

Your Ref.: 8340.A (El Mirage)
(CA-068.60)

My Property in San Bernardino County Parcel No. 0461181030000

Dear Sirs,

I thank you for sending me your memorandum concerning your wish to acquire my property located in the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. I understand that you would be willing to pay "fair market value". I wonder whether you could give me any idea of what "fair market value" would be. I would appreciate that any figure you might mention would be an estimate and not binding on you in any way. I would point out that I own partial mineral rights on my property. May I also point out that I am nearly 71 years of age. In consequence, the only transaction which could interest me would be a cash sale. 31.1

Yours faithfully,

Rudolf Hellmann

32

Tarick Corp.

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 APR 23 AM 10:31
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

10535 Vestone Way
Los Angeles, Ca. 90024
213-476-2195

Mining
Minerals
Metals

Field Office
P.O. Box 758
Palmdale, Ca. 93550
805-947-9961

Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
California Desert District
Barstow, Ca. 92311-3221

Attention: Mr. Mark Davis-Project Manager.

Dear Sir:

We have received the Draft of the Management Plan for El Mirage Area.... dated March 1990.

We would like to go on record as supporting this draft. It is the finest program for recreational use we have seen.

It is well programed and located in an area most suited for such a program.

As property owners in the immediate area and as a business owner as well, much good will come to this area by this program.

Yours Truly,

Richard Taxe-President

33

April 2, 1990

Mr. Alden Sievers
Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311-3221

Dear Mr. Sievers:

SUBJECT: DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN -- EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

I have reviewed the subject plan and offer the following comments for your consideration:

1. Pages 16 and 17. The following sections or portions thereof should remain open to OHV use:

   T7N, R7W, Section 2
   T8N, R7W, Sections 35, 26
   T8N, R6W, Sections 28 through 34

   In addition, the following Sections, or portions thereof, should be acquired for the Management Area and opened to OHV use:

   T7N, R6W, Sections 3 and 10

   By opening-up these sections, or portions of them, OHV users will be able to travel in a loop around, but not within, the Shadow Mountain Valley and Village. This will greatly expand the area available to OHVs without impacting the citizens of Shadow Valley. 33.1

   The northern Shadow Mountains have historically been heavily used by motorcyclists, and can continue to be used without impacting the sensitive Shadow Mountain Valley simply by providing a corridor for OHV travel. Fencing could easily be installed along the divide of the Northern Shadow Mountains in order to keep OHV traffic on the north slope, eliminating any noise or visual impacts to the Valley. The Plan shows this method will be used on the Southern Shadow Mountains to keep OHVs off the north slope (facing the valley).

   Furthermore, by creating a "loop" corridor, low impact motorcycle competitions, such as enduros, could be conducted in the area. Without this additional area, the Management Area would be too small to accomodate such events.

2. Page 17. The "isolated" area to the northwest of the drylake should remain open to OHV use and should be connected to the main portion of the management area by a fenced/gated corridor. Additional lands should be acquired, where necessary, to accomplish this. The small hills in this area have also been heavily used historically by motorcycles and for camping.

   There is no valid reason for excluding this already heavily used and predominantly publicly owned land. Additional land acquisition and fencing costs could be offset by higher fees, which are easily justified given the current high use pattern. Patrolling this area will not require additional resources. 33.2

3. Page 22. The Plan must specifically define what constitutes a "Hare and Hound OHV event". Input on a proper definition should be solicited from representatives of the AMA's District 37 office. In addition, the Plan should expressly allow motorcycle enduro events, or any other OHV competition events in which no more than five contestants start the course on any single minute. 33.3

4. Page 37. The plan should be specific about the type of dust control agent to be used on roads. In many cases, application of road oils may be prohibited by the California Department of Health Services or the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, due to water quality and inhalation hazard concerns. Whenever possible, water should be the preferred agent. 33.4

5. Page 38. Decibel meters used to test OHVs for noise standards must be periodically calibrated according to manufacturers recommendations and by personnel trained in such calibration methods. In addition, personnel administering the noise tests must be appropriately trained to conduct such tests in the manner prescribed by law. 33.5

Please call me at (818) 302-2149 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

DAVID W. KAY, D. Env.

124

cc: AMA District 37 Office
Editor, Cycle News

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Pete Schabarum
First District

Kenneth Hahn
Second District

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Richard Knerr
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David Lippey

PARKS ARE FOR PEOPLE

34

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
433 South Vermont Avenue · Los Angeles, California 90020-1975 · 213/738-2961
Rodney E. Cooper Director

May 8, 1990

Mr. Alden Sievers, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311-3221

DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR EL MIRAGE
COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA
8340.A (EL MIRAGE) (CA-068.60)

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation has received and reviewed the above mentioned document, concurs with the findings, and supports the project as it is proposed.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to review this project. If you have questions or need further information please contact me at (213) 738-2054.

Sincerely,

Marcia L. McDonough
Park Planning Assistant

mlm

35

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAR 21 AM 8:00
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA.

George S. Lyle
18900 Nearview Drive
Canyon Country, CA 91351
805 298-4143

March 17, 1990

Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Area Resource Office
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

Regarding: Proposed "El Mirage Cooperative Management Plan"

Dear Sirs:

I have just been advised of your intention to prohibit the use of Off-Highway vehicles in the Shadow Mountain area north of El Mirage Dry Lake. I object to this action for the following reasons:

1. This proposal would restrict Off-Highway vehicle use to the lakebed itself and a narrow strip of land to the northeast of the lakebed. Compressing all OHV usage into this area will make El Mirage far more dangerous. Currently, safety minded OHV users avoid the lakebed because of the high level of ultralight aircraft, gyrocopter, and high speed time trial activity. 35.1

2. The area between Shadow Mountain road and Edwards Air Force Base has been used by OHVs since the 1940s. Trails and campsite locations have been established for years. There are few people residing in this area and most OHV users give them a wide berth. Since OHV activity has been established in the El Mirage area for so long, all of the present residents knew of the OHVs prior to their coming. I am unaware of any major problems caused by OHV users in this area and, if there is a problem, then the solution lies in education or enforcement, not in fencing off large areas of public land. 35.2

3. The proposed fence is an expensive hazard. People will hit it and be injured or killed. Who will safety mark the numerous places where roads and trails cross the fence and keep those safety markings in good order? If the problem is the complaints of private land owners, would it not be better to have them fence their own property? The BLM budget can ill-afford to build and maintain 40 miles of fence. 35.3

The BLM has done a good job in the El Mirage area. I hope that you will not be pressured into this dangerous and unfair project. Three generations of my family and friends have enjoyed our public land in the El Mirage area and have the right to continue to do so. Please make the correct decision and leave our public lands open for our rightful use.

Sincerely,

George S. Lyle

36

R.N. (Bob) Martin
P.O. Box 21 (9830 Avalon Road)
Phelan, California 92371
(619) 868-6606

RECEIVED

March 24, 1990

Barstow Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow
California 92311-3221

Dear Area Manager:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. My family has had four landsailors at the storage yard on the west end of El Mirage since 1967. We generally make several trips a year in addition to the times I fly RC power and sailplanes there. It seems obvious that we will no longer be able to pursue the use of our landsailors unless we purchase an expensive trailer to haul them as the current access from the storage yard will be fenced off and the west gate will be open on very few weekends. We prefer to go during the week. The impact on our family's use is therefore MAJOR as it will be for all the others who use the storage yard!

On the positive side I must say that the lake bed is in the best shape I have ever seen it since you have been keeping vehicles off it when it is wet.

I do not have a great deal of sympathy for the local residents complaints about the recreational uses on and about the lake. That was happening when they bought there. Landsailors, motorcyclists and gyrocopters were using the Grey Mountain Road as early as 1967 to my knowledge. They are in the same class as the people who buy in the flight path of an airport and then want it put out of business because of the noise.

The most serious flaw in the plan is the location of the primary entrance. The prevailing winds are from the west and generally occur in the afternoon. The east end of the lake is often in a blowing sand and dust storm while this seldom occurs at the west end. It seems unnecessary and hazardous to force people to go through these storms to get on or off the lake. 36.1

Specific comments to the plan are as follows;

Pg. 6 - discusses use of "private" roads to gain access to the lake. Unless these roads have been posted and have been physically blocked off once each 7 years they 36.2

are no longer private but have been allowed to fall into the public domain according to California law. Therefore there cannot be a "trespass" associated with their use.

Pg. 7 E. 6)- concerns the lack of facilities. Since there seems to be significant use made today without such facilities I don't see the need to spend money on them unless you can make them self supporting. In general such facilities seem to be trashed by the same people you believe need them. Rather I believe you should be encouraging self contained camping units. 36.3

Pg. 24 C. 4)- Very good. Mud play is a legitimate use of the area and keeping an area for it provides for that while preserving the lake surface proper.

Pg. 27 C. 8)- What is a "primary vehicle". If I tow a trailer behind my motorhome and also bring my Bronco 4x4 with a trailer will it be one fee or two? We use the Bronco to retrieve becalmed landsailors. 36.4

Pg. 29 C. 11) Discussion- Equipment will be checked for compliance with what?? 36.5

Pg. 29 C.12)- A full time EMT is overkill and an unnecessary expense. Weekends perhaps, but not during the week. 36.6

Pg. 32 C.17) Discussion- A recorded message phone line is a great idea!

Pg. 36 D.5)- Since the Management goal is for "intensive outdoor recreation- allowing for the widest variety of activities possible--free from restrictive zoning" closures and restrictions are <u>not</u> compatible especially for plant and wild life protection! This is an intensive use area not a wild life/plant preserve. My concern here is that the environmentalists will readily jump on this and demand more and more closures. 36.7

Pg. 50 E. 9)- In addition to or even in lieu of restrooms, a sanitary dump station should be provided. 36.8

Pg. 54 F 5)- Allowing "worm track" courses is good.

Pg. 57 G 5)- For goodness sake don't put the "visibility" disks at the east end of the lake or if you must don't base a decision as to what to do at the west end of the lake on what is occurring there.

126

Sincerely;

B Martin

37

El Mirage Property
April 11, 1990
Page 3

Therefore we support Alternate Plan B of the Draft Plan (No Action) and strongly urge the signatory Agencies to work with the CHP and County Sheriff in law enforcement until a more realistic, equitable solution can be found.

Sincerely, Jerry Moore

Jerry Moore
BOX 403
BREA, CA. 92621

BLM says 85% of the people who use the area is off road people or green sticker people, yet 100% of the funds are coming from the green sticker funds. One must wonder if the fund has 472 million to spend on this project, as this is what is projected by BLM (pages62-64). 37.1 One must truly review this document to see if in fact it is a realistic approach. Next one MUST require an EIR report. 37.2 If this is done without one all parties are and will be subject to a lawsuit in that department as well as values. Please note also that the city of Adelanto was not mentioned in the report. They should have a say as they are adjacent to this property. The independent EIR would address this city's concerns as they should rightly be included. 37.3 Who is this person Brad Martin who prepared the so called environmental assessment? What is his background and qualifications. I suggest you consider this very carefully as it may very well be a lawsuit and these questions will be asked. If it turns out that he in fact is not qualified get your check books out plus damages. I strongly suggest you have some very good legal advise on this matter before you sign this document. 37.4 I hardly think an outdoor planner is remotely qualified to assess the situation properly. On page 59 shows where he falls in the organization and it is or should be obvious this project is not ready to be signed at this time for the above reasons. We also ask that each member of the Off Highway Motor Vehicle recreation Commission gets a copy of all letters submitted to the BLM and to the State of California Parks and recreation Department. We also feel all the other agencies involved should also be informed via copies of letters so they can be informed as to the concerns of the property owners in the effected area. The reason is then they will not be able to say they did not know of these concerns when it gets to be a hot issue to handle, as you know when a suit is filed all parties are named. 37.5

38

Mr. Alden Sievers,
Bureau of Land Management
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

March 13,1990

RE: 8340.A (El Mirage)
(CA-068.60)

Dear Mr. Sievers,

I am a property owner in the affected area of the El Mirage /Shadow Mountain area.

I am outraged by this and will fight it all the way to court if it comes to the eminent domain issue! I purchased the property years ago and spent years making my payments building for my future, and now you want to destroy that. A few years ago the county wanted me to give some property for a right of way for a road which I did. This property is a long term investment property for M-1 use and was zoned as such. How dare you come up with such a plan! It is a poor excuse to use as you say in your letter that people are trespassing therefore you will buy it for them and make it legal, this is a typical bureaucratic approach to a problem! First of all such a large area is not needed, if you want to take the dry lake ONLY then I would not object, but any more than that, I will and do object! By this action you have proposed, has driven the value of the property down in recent years! This property will be very valuable and totally out of reach to purchase as soon as the Palmdale Airport work is started. If you do not already know, the Los Angeles department of airports has purchased over the years about 17, 000 acres for a new airport, and when that time comes to develop, the land values will skyrocket and I plan to be there! If you look at the people who trespass on other's property, they generally are the type that would not respect anybody's property regardless who owns it. Generally they do not care about others property as long as they can go out on a weekend and raise hell! Since they are breaking the law you say ok we will change the law in effect by purchasing the land and letting them destroy

38.1

38.2

the land when it is the public's land (mine too you know, as we all pay for this). As a property owner in the effected area I most strongly object to such an outrageous plan to take people's land for others to play on. Why not try for George Air base or other government owned land, or go to the desert where there is nothing to conflict with development. Where are you going to draw the line? Are you going to continue buying privately owned land to accommodate the trespassers? This project is and will be too close to an urban area. You mark my words, when it is developed around the area people will be complaining about the noise dust etc, and you will be moving on. By that time you will have destroyed mine and others investors lives! If you have willing sellers is one thing but to take it under eminent domain is totally another, for a fraction of the value it will bring in the future. You can not get paid for future profits under eminent domain. This concept is against private ownership principals and not fair, right or just. In your letter you say the county is the lead agency and will buy it who is going to pay the county for it! I will contact the county and the federal government to see if the taxpayers want to buy this boondoggle. In this day and age when we need to control our spending and try to bring government spending in line with income what in the hell will you bring in income to even have a payback in your lifetime if ever ! One will say we don't intend to make money, well that is part of the whole point. It is a waste of our resources. If the property was donated then that is one thing but when hard money goes to purchase something it has to be for more than "the public good" That is a very poor way to run an organization and is not in the best interest of all Americans as they are the ones who pay. It is another empire building project

38.3

38.4

38.5

I was not sampled until now about this plan and it stinks to high heaven! Go ahead and use the 12,000 acres you have and be happy, leave the private owners out of it. If they want to sell fine, but not by eminent domain. I suggest you contact every owner and see what they say and if they are aware of the future in the valley. They will tell you in a hurry to stuff it where the sun don't shine!. I will be in line to say the very

same thing as well as taking this to the congress and county facilities to try and stop this debauchery of private ownership

You are taking the path of least resistance. Taking property away from a minority of lawabiding citizens and handing it over to a majority of trespassers! Is it absolute that when it is all said and done. that none of the surrounding property will ever be trespassed on ever again? and if so are you going to continue to take property away and add it to this "Disneyland for bikers"! Only a few people who are residents in fact it may only be less than ten people have homes in the effected area and they are the supposed ones complaining about this in the first place. They can fence their property and prosecute any trespassers on the spot or via the sheriff. Why not contact Honda. Kawasaki and others to go out and buy land for the people who want to play aroud in the dirt rather than have our government at the federal or local level pay for this. They created the vehicles why not make them be responsible to provide the legal playground to use them. After all they are the ones who are profiting by this.

38.6

38.7

Sincerely.

Jerry Moore

Box 403

Brea. CA 92621

39

3/27/90

Dear Sirs:

RECEIVED

Regarding your letter to me a Landowner in the El Mirage / Shadow Mountain Area (8340.A (El Mirage) (CA-068.60) You state that you are planning to destroy the environment in this area for OHV's I am very much against this. If it was just the flat land at El Mirage it might be different but Shadow Mountain View Lots is obcene. You state that a majority of land owners are in favor of this. This I doubt & I am very perturbed about not being notified of this & given me and others the just right to voice our objections at your previous meetings.

39.1

39.2

39.3

I am 74 years old & bought these acres about 15 years ago for my grandchildren (who are now in College) & intended to develop this property in the next few years.

(Cont.)

40

RECEIVED
1990 APR 12 AM 8 00
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA.

April 9,1990
271 E. Jeanine Drive
Warner Ranch Estates
Tempe, Arizona 85284

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, California 92311

Dear Sir:

My wife and I attended the meeting which was held on March 31st at the Community Center of El Mirage, California for the discussion of the sale of property in the Shadow Mountain area for recreational purposes.

I was very disappointed to learn of the many transactions which had taken place regarding this matter and we were not notified by your office. We bought the property as an investment eighteen years ago, and have continued to pay taxes on this property since that time. Also we paid a large amount for the price of this property with the understanding it would likely be developed in the future or we could possibly build in the area, when water was brought into the town.

The El Mirage Lake is a different type of land than the surrounding land and definitely has more to offer than ordinary desert land, therefore, I do not think you can offer fair market value if valued by the comparison of other parcels in the Antelope Valley. 40.1

We would be agreeable to a sale of this property but it would have to be negotiated other than fair market value as stated at the meeting.

We would appreciate notification when and where future meetings will be held, as well as mail communications.

Sincerely,

Fred W. McCormick

(Cont.)

The map you sent me (a copy enclosed) is marked off in 1-39 Squares (which mean Nothing to me) Please mark the enclosed copy with an X designating where my parcels are on your map & return to me by return mail (in enclosed, addressed, stamped envelop.)

Also please send me a copy of the draft Management Plan. by return mail.

Sincerely,

R.D. McCarty
11006 Broadstone Dr
Culver City, 90230
Calif
(213) 836-4206

My Property
Parcel No. 0461361160000
San Bernardino County
Tract 8071, Lot 152
Map Bk 101 Pgs 13-31

129

41

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 APR 18 AM 8 00
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA.

April 16, 1990

To the Barstow Area Manager;

Re: Concerning the El Mirage cooperative Management area and Shadow Mountains

I am in agreement with the management area boundarys. My concern and disagreement lies with in the Mountain Range North of Shadow Mnt. Road, known and stated as the Route Inventory Area Nbr. #6. Of which the first of this was known to me March of 1990. It did not come up in the years of 1985 or 1986.

By using this area as a limited use area without making it (ANOTHER) OHV Park, it will create the same problems as you and the community have already experienced (WHICH WOULD BE OUT OF CONTROL WITHOUT PERMENENT BLM SUPERVISION FOR THE SURROUNDING AREA.)

The BLM says this area could be used for licensed vehicles only: 4 Wheel drive, Dune Buggys at which the tires can be changed and Off road tires put on. On road - Off road enduro motorcycles at

2/

which the tires and sprockets can be changed or the motorcycle comparip come out with a package that meets both criterias. By the BLM saying this route inventory area is open to limited access, its like saying we can go here instead of going to the management area and save money, drive, leave our fires going, trash and do pretty much what we want, including going over the ridge of the mountain. At which point we, the users or either lost, did not know are dog went that way.

My questions to you the BLM.! How will you keep the users of the Route Inventory area Nbr. #6, from coming over the mountain range toward the village and will these people have to have special permits with specific and detailed instructions.

My biggest question is how are you going to inforce the rules and regulations for this area. For without inforcement this area will never get the go ahead.

I've seen the present & the Past, what will make the future any different.

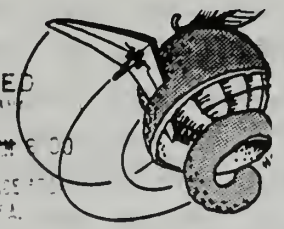
Sincerely,
Hank Noble

130

42

Orange County
HANG GLIDING ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 15151, Santa Ana, California 92705



RECEIVED

April 17, 1990

Mr. Alden Sievers
United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, California 92311

Dear Mr. Sievers:

Please accept our sincere thanks for the efforts of the Bureau of Land Management in preserving recreational opportunities on and around El Mirage dry lake.

Your role is crucial to the preservation of our sport, since El Mirage possesses the rare meteorological and topographical characteristics necessary for hang gliding.

We have shared and enjoyed the lake with land sailing, model airplanes, off-road vehicles, gyrocopters, and other sports requiring settings not available in metropolitan areas for many years.

Safety and responsibility are of prime importance to our members, and by establishing areas called for in the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area, we may continue to pursue our growing sport in harmony with our neighbors on the lake.

On behalf of the Orange County pilots and their families who enjoy the lake, I commend you for the advances you have made in this endeavor, and strongly support this truly important project.

Respectfully,

Cindy Gall
President

43

Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, California 92311-3221

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 APR 26 AM 11: 18
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

April 23, 1990

Attn, Barstow Area Manager

Gentlemen,

We do not need, and I do not want, another Government Takeover of thousands of acres of California public land.

The Bureau of Land Management wants to "protect" the El Mirage Dry Lake and many adjacent miles of property from the public. They will accomplish this "protection" by building a fence around the area and by charging the public admission fees to enter specific parts under Bureau of Land Management rules and conditions. 43.1

The proposed Government Takeover of thousands of acres of privately held property will result in the loss of millions of dollars of property tax revenues to the State of California and the Counties of San Bernadino and Los Angeles during all of the future years. 43.2

Additionally, what was public land within the area will no longer be available for sale by the Government and will never be developed as another needed near-by residential/commercial area. 43.3

While diverting taxes from the State and the Counties, the Government will also spend many millions of dollars of taxpayer money for the building of fences and other "improvements" to prevent the public from having free access to what will be government property.

The Government says they will recoup some of the costs of Government Control by charging the public fees to enter the fenced area and by fining visitors who violate any of their rules. 43.4

Government Control of a now open area will cost many millions of taxpayer dollars, but without Government Control, the taxpaying public presently has use of the area without paying additional taxes.

An advantage to a few of the present users would be the installation of outhouses. A possible advantage to the few local residents would be a little less traffic on the local dirt roads.

Both of these advantages could be realized by spending a relatively few dollars to blacktop two or three access roads leading into the dry lake area and by installing two or three smaller versions of the major highway "Rest Stops" along those roads. 43.5

Most other "public advantages" as listed in the Management Plan booklet issued by the Bureau of Land Management already exist. The area is already under the jurisdiction of all State and County departments including the Sheriff's and the Fire Departments. There are State and County laws regarding safety, vehicle licensing, speed limits, and other rules enforced by existing public officials. 43.6

Sincerely,

N. J. Regnier
8525 E. Duarte Road, San Gabriel, California 91775

131

44

U.S DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
150 COOLWATER LANE
BARSTOW, CALIFORNIA 92311-3221

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
90 MAY -3 AM 11: 55
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

DEAR SIRS;

AS PER YOUR RECENT LETTER ON THE ACQUISITION OF THE LAND KNOWN AS SHADOW MOUNTAINS; I HAPPEN TO BE ONE OF THE ABSENTEE OWNERS AND AM CERTAINILY CONCERED ABOUT IT. WOULD YOU PLEASE SEND ME A COPY OF THE DRAFT OF YOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN. I AM IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH YOUR PROJECT; IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE LONG AGO.

SINCERELY YOURS,

RALPH Q, ROBLES

1 Fullerton 5-28-1990

45

RECEIVED
1990 MAY 30 PM 3 00

To whom it may concern!

In 1986 my mind was set to leave my Country Gegmany and come to America. I had many reasons for leaving Gegmany but basicly there was one main factor. I found here in California the freedom I always dreamt about. See, I try now to express myself with my 4 years experience in english as good as I can. In Gegmany we have a situation which is for somebody born and raised in America unreal. There is absolutly no place to go with a Dirt Bike, the only legal places are privatly owned and you have to be a Club-member to ride there which can be very expensive. All they other Land is owned by the Gejovernment and riding there is illegal. If you still do so, you risk losing your drivers licence. Well, I did not come to California to be able to ride a dirt bike but it is

2651 Claredon St.
Torrance, Ca 90505

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAR 22 AM 8 00

March 20, 1990

Dear Sir;

Reference: 8340.A (El Mirage)
(CA-068.60)

I purchased this property for a long term investment. Since the surrounding areas are rapidly growing, I see a great potential for my property. I do not plan to sell at this time.

Sincerely
John L Tucker

133

one of those things you really appreciate by coming from a country like me and that makes you feel free and makes America so unique. I understand that we have to preserve nature but still, there should be some places the public can go and enjoy to be free. Things in Germany getting better now because they are tearing down the "Wall". Are Things getting worse in America by putting up fences all over the place?

Sincerely

ROBERT ROSEN
2623 YORBA LINDA BL. #319
FULLERTON, CA 92631

SANTA ANA, CA
1 PM
29 MAR
1990
92711

BLM Barstow
Resource Area Office
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

47

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAY 21 PM 12: 26
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

May 16, 1990

TO: United States Dept. of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311-3221

FROM: Olga V. Sarabia, Landowner
El Mirage/Shadow Mountain Area
Parcel #0458341010000

SUBJECT: EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA
8340.A (El Mirage) (CA-068.60)

As a landowner (2 1/2 acres) very near El Mirage dry lake, I am very pleased that the area is being designated as a regional recreational facility.

It is my understanding that our land is being bought at fair market value. It is my hope that this means that an area such as mine, within 100 yards of the dry lake, has a higher value than the land that is not in proximity.

Please let me know what is being considered as the average price for the tracts and whether my assumption as stated above is correct.

47.1

Thank you

Olga Velez Sarabia
1000 So. Valencia St.
Alhambra, CA 91801

134

48

podiatrist

Dr. Alan E. Schultz
foot surgeon

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAR 27 AM 8 00
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA.

(805) 983-0820

1300 N. VENTURA RD.
SUITE 6A
OXNARD, CA 93030

3/22/90

Dear Sirs;

I have visited, with my 4 son & camped on El Mirage for the last 11 years. My boys & I have learned of nature & appreciate the beauty of the area.

We have always cleaned up after we left.

The Schultz family is opposed to the fencing & closing of this beautiful area to camping & off road vehicles.

48.1

Thank you

MAY 1, 1990

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAY -2 PM 12: 55
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

49

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA

ATTN: MR. ALDEN SIEVERS &
MR. MARK H. DAVIS

Dear Sirs,

As a member of Shadow Mountain Land Owners committee and former High Desert Owners organization, I have been involved in the plan for the El Mirage Park and wish to express the following concerns;

Please note.

The open routes area is not acceptable to any of the land owners in the Shadow Mountain area. It is just another free park for all off road vehicles to use at their discretion. There is no way that three (3) rangers can keep the vehicles in the stated area. It would take over twenty (20) rangers to keep them on existing trails, for as you might know most riders like to make their own trails. 49.1

The dust from this area will be a problem and the trails would need to be watered down weekly. All off road vehicles would need to be equiped with noise suppressors in order to keep the noise level down to an acceptable level. Further consider this; why would the users pay to go in the park when they are able to ride in this area for free. I see no need to spend millions of dollars on a park while leaving the land area outside of the park open for the riders continued use. This makes no sense at all. 49.2

We all agree to the El Mirage park boundry as set up but do not agree to any of the proposed area outside the park. The land being closed out consists of small isolated parcels of no consequence while about 90 percent of the government land is being left wide open for destruction and vandalism. It is this land area that is being left open that is the main source of all the current trouble resulting in the destruction of private homes and property. This is not what was promised to private property owners by Mr. Sievers and Mr. Davis. 49.3

To surmise then, there is no need to waste tax payers money on a park when you are leaving the outlying area open for bikes, off-road vehicles, go-carts, etc., to use. As property owners, we are against the park plan as it stands now. Many of the property owners who had their homes totally destroyed or vandalized, and private property stolen, blame the BLM, Barstow Division, for their losses, due to gross negligence of BLM for not enforcing the policy that was laid down by BLM that the land was open only to existing trails. In the past ten (10) years, hundreds of new trails and roads have been made and many property owners are outraged by the irresponsible blazing of new trails over their private property. 49.4

Further, the ecological destruction is quite obvious now, scarred hillsides and a network of barren crisscrossing trails abound. Much wildlife has virtually disappeared. The desert turtle, kit foxes, and chipmunks are rarely seen anymore. 49.5

This situation must be dealt with at once. Talking with certain groups who have only their monied interests at risk is no longer feasible. Save our High Desert, at least in this obvious manner.

Sincerely,

John A. Shaw

John A. Shaw,
a concerned home owner

John A. Shaw

5322 DIANA DR.
P.O. BOX N
ADELANTO, CA 92301

50

New Address
ACCURATE ALLOYS, INC.
5455 N. IRWINDALE AVENUE
IRWINDALE, CA 91706-2045

RECEIVED
90 MAR 30

Accurate Alloys, Incorporated • 1745 East 42nd Street • Los Angeles, California 90058
Phone 213/231-4179 • 800/842-2222 • Fax 213/231-8119

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

DEAR SIR'S

I UNDERSTAND THEY WANT
TO FENCE OF EL MIRAGE DRY
LAKE - I FOR ONE AM AGAINST
THIS, BECAUSE IT'S ONE OF THE
FEW PLACES THE LITTLE KIDS CAN
LEARN HOW TO RIDE & BE
FAIRLY SAFE.

50.1

J. P. SHEA
17024 WALNUT ST.
BELLFLOWER CA. 90706

136

51

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 APR 30 AM 11: 17
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

SCE

Southern California Edison Company
1190 DURFEE AVENUE, SUITE 250
SOUTH EL MONTE CALIFORNIA 91733
P O BOX 800
ROSEMEAD CALIFORNIA 91770

D C JONES
MANAGER OF NORTHERN REGION
LAND SERVICES DIVISION
REAL PROPERTIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

TELEPHONE
(818) 302 6209

April 27, 1990

Mr. Alden Sievers, Area Manager
Barstow Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

Subject: U.S. Department of the Interior
Draft Management Plan for El Mirage
Cooperative Management Area

Dear Mr. Sievers:

The Southern California Edison Company has reviewed the Draft Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area and submits the following comment:

This project does not affect Edison's existing transmission line facilities or Edison's plans for future generation, or transmission resources. Based on this review SCE has no objection to this plan.

If you have any questions regarding the comments, please contact Mr. Art Cheng at (818) 302-6204.

Sincerely,

D.C. Jones

AC:sg:02

52

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAY -2 PM 12:43
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

April 28, 1990

Mark H. Davis
Project Manager, El Mirage Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

Dear Mark:

Please accept this letter in comment on the draft management plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. We would like to register our support of the BLM's efforts in compiling this compromise use agreement between user groups and the community.

Our club has participated in the community meetings over the last several years. We feel this plan balances the interests of various user groups and answers our interests as recreational users of the dry lake and surrounding area.

We appreciate the effort which the Barstow Area office has invested in formulation of this plan with our members and other users. We continue to support BLM's efforts toward final plan acceptance and implementation.

Sincerely,

Cindy Brickner

Cindy Brickner
Club Representative

Southern California Soaring Association
38239 Lisman Avenue
Palmdale, CA 93550

53

April 4, 1990

RECEIVED
1990 APR -5 PM 2:00

United States Department of
The Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311-3221

Dear Sir:

In regards to your letter of March 1, 1990, I respond with great enthusiasm.

I do request a copy of the Draft Management Plan in order to get a broader view of this program. In view of the fact that this land has been dormant since purchasing, I definitely would be willing to sell, at a reasonable price. I have had several offers but very ridiculous ones at that.

The taxes on this property are up to date and fully paid for.

I regret that I was unable to participate in the public meetings of March 29, 1990, and March 31, 1990, having received your letter this date of April 4, 1990. It seems the letter was detained by our old address. Please note the new address below. The tax assessors office in San Bernardino County should have made the change being they were informed at the time of our moving.

Sincerely,

Albert A. Stradiotto

Albert A. Stradiotto
5311 Francisca Way
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
818-707-0794

54

To: Mr. Alden Sievers
Proj. Mgr. BLM.
C/o Mr. Tim Read, Supervisor.
Re: The El Mirage Management Area

Request:
Environmental Impact Report (E.I.R.) is hereby requested for the El Mirage Lake Bed / Vicinity (Residential Use).

Approx. 130 property owners that attended 1st Saturday Public meeting (over 100 notices) are of the consensus: Keep El Mirage / vicinity for week-end campers, & future retirement. Safe recreation, e.g. glider planes, heliport, for helicopters is preferred over dangerous ATM(s), motorcycles, or risky, speeding race cars, etc detrimental to lives of other recreationists like myself + my Honolulu church members who plan to retire at Condo site at "Smog-free," El Mirage Valley. E.M. Chamber of Commerce, EMCIA, voters, all of us, need your help to "SAVE" EL MIRAGE VALLEY! (Stop the Sys:2)

54.1

and not EA sent to Mrs Sievers

138

55

RECEIVED
APR 18 AM 8 30

SYLMAR
HANG GLIDING ASSOCIATION

April 17, 1990

Mr. Alden Slevers
United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

Regarding: El Mirage Cooperative Managment Area

Dear Mr. Slevers:

As secretary of the Sylmar Hang Gliding Association, I wish to express our strong support for the positive role you are playing in the preservation of racreational opportunities on and around El Mirage dry lake. As you know, this area has hostad many forms of recreation, including hang gliding, for decadas.

Sports suchs as hang gliding, motorcycling, off road vehicle riding, land salling, model airplanes, gyrocopters, and others require specific geographic and topographic settings not available in matropolitan araas. Through the establishment of areas such as that called for in the El Mirage Cooperative Management area, taxpayers and their families may continue to pursue these legitimate sports activities in a racognized and responsible manner.

On behalf of the members of the SHGA, I commend the Bureau of Land Management for its support in regards to this truly important project.

Respectfully,

Robart Richardson
Secretary, Sylmar Hang Gliding Association

13812 GAVINA AVE., SYLMAR, CA 91342 (818) 367-3656, (818) 988-0111

56

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF LAND MGMT
'96 APR 19 AM 9
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA

Ahmed M. Swindle
604 N. 9½ St.
Paragould, Ark. 72450

Dear Mr. Mastin.
I just received about 2 lbs.
of paper regarding the El
Mirage Dry Lake property.
My 40 acres lies in sec.
35 - T 7 N., R 7 W. as I
see it my property lies
in phase two.
My question are, has
there been a fair market
value been established
and when can I have
to get my money.
I bought that property
about 22 years ago as
an investment, I am
now retired and could
really use the money.
Please let me know
the answers to my
questions.

Thank You
Ahmed Swindle

57

Thayle F. Taylor
2840 Stromboli Road
Costa Mesa, Calif. 92626

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 APR 25 AM 11: 34
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

April22, 1990

Barstow Area Manager - Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, Calif. 92311-3221

Gentlemen:

As a land owner of El Mirage area property I wish to record my objection, and rejection to and of the Proposed El Mirage Recreational Development noted in the draft of the report Mr. Mark Davis graciously provided me just last week. (Why I was omitted from the previous pertinent mailings would be interesting to know, however it is not a question, but should be henceforth corrected.)

A. The plan is far too vast and expansive, and expensive, an undertaking just to accomodate the intrusions of those seeking recreation into such a sparsely habitated area. Fencing, tollgates and such are not the wild life adventurers goals and invoke constraints not required, only desired by a very few. 57.1

B. The report lists a lot of detail budget cost entries which are presented in 1989 dollar values. While this may be standard budgeting fiscals it is certainly misleading as to the real-time estimated/expected costs, any mention of which I find quite absent. Yet these are thecosts we must live with. Even in 1989 dollars the project is very much under-funded. It is, of course, impossible to even assess the degree of this as the amount of accomplishment planned is also adjustable. In short, it is too soon to undertake a project of this size if you unbiasly look at its value vs. the more important places for money to be spent today, ie AIDS, Homelessness, Crime Prevention and even more Jails. Aren't these more deserving than a playground for the fortunate few with the wherewithall in time and money to afford RV, OHV, glider, racer and land-sailer operations in open areas? Don't the controlled access impositions just drive the recreationers to outside-the-fence areas, [illegible]! 57.2

C. If the actual [illegible] area protection is required, but a fence with controlled access around it only. Surely including an additional 20,000 acres to be also blocked off is an overkill of ridiculous proportions with its attendant patrol-security-access-service-facility operations becoming costs far too sezeable even to start with. And history has shown that such costs will continue to climb to become unbearly burdensome.

D. If those living in the immediate area are so intruded upon as to desire fencing of their living area, then you should take the available, not estimated, funds and offer them a 50% subsidy on the cost of such immediate perimeter fences; with, of course, a sensible decide-by/accomplish-by set of dates. There is enough money for that, and the logic of protecting a few hundred or so from the tens of thousands of RVers has much more precedent than fencing in some 40 square miles. The Animal Parks in Europe, Africa and Asia fence in the few people not the animals who so vastly outnumber them. 57.3

Thayle F. Taylor
2840 Stromboli Road
Costa Mesa, Calif. 92626

E. Just in the past six to eight months I have personally received offers to purchase my El Mirage acreage, each higher than the previous, and now some three and a half times more than those of a year earlier. With last weeks news of the possible George Air Force base commercial application, these higher offers are both understandable and logical. Will the remuneration for our land, contemplated by the words "Fair Market Value" and "Eminent Domain", recognize this increasing marketing value? It is something we must know before we can make a normal, businesslike decision. A single "Judge and Jury" bears a notoriously non-fair implication. Are the San Bernardino County assessors and Land Acquisitioners any less biased? I strongly suspect not. 57.4

Please, Gentlemen, be honestly realistic in your deliberations. I realize that, as proponents of the plan being developed all these years, you have by now an ingrained desire for its fullfillment--and maybe in 1985 there was a case. But now in 1990, the 1985 priorities have been vastly re-oriented in whats-worth-what and there we should go. A government land grab is neither fair to the total populace of Southern California nor to those of us who own land.

Sincerely

Thayle F. Taylor

Thayle F Taylor
(714)546-0752

58

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAR 26 AM 8 00
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA.

Mar. 22. 1990

Dear Sir —

[illegible]

58.1

[illegible]

Yours Truly [illegible]

[illegible]

59

2802 W. Avenue 30
Los Angeles Ca 90065
April 28, 1990

BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAY -2 PM 12: 50
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

Mr. Alden Sievers
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, Calif 92311-3221

Dear Mr Sievers

These are our written comment that we are submitting regarding the draft Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area of March 1990.

I participated in the public meeting on March 31, 1990 at the El Mirage Community Center and we also participated in the recent mail-in campaign by an organized group of El Mirage landowners

Nonetheless, we wish to submit these comments also to re-inforce and re-emphasize our viewpoint in opposition to the implementation of this plan.

most importantly, we feel THERE HAS NOT BEEN ENOUGH TIME GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC AND TO THE LANDOWNERS IN PARTICULAR.

This plan certainly should not be adopted now without at least

a reasonable extension of the public comment period, during which further study, further meetings and further input is obtained from off road vehicle users, area residents, "absentee" landowners and public officials.

THE VARIOUS GROUPS WHO WORKED TO FORMULATE THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN HAD FIVE YEARS TO DO IT. THE LANDOWNERS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES WERE GIVEN ONLY 60 DAYS TO ABSORB AND RESPOND TO THIS PLAN

59.1

As you know if you listened to the recording of the comments made at the March 31 meeting, one of the issues raised repeatedly was FAIRNESS. The fact notice of this whole plan is NOT FAIR

The "random sampling" of only 100 of the approximately 1100 landowners is not fair. The plan to eventually use eminent domain to force sale of these acres by landowners who have been paying taxes on them for up to 20 years or more is not fair.

59.2

The typical landowner in El Mirage is not a "greedy speculator" (as one of the very few persons that happened to be in favor of the draft plan at the March 31 meeting tried to portray us)

A speculator is one who looks for a fast return on his investment - a quick purchase and a quick sale to take advantage of rising prices.

We all knew when we purchased this land that we were in for long term investments. Admittedly we

did not expect it perhaps to be as long as it turned out to be, but we thought we "knew" that investment in land should if nothing else not result in an eventual loss.

Your plan, which cannot be said to have "apparent overwhelming popular support" after the public meetings that were held is one which would force landowners to take a loss

Even the off road vehicle users present at the meeting, who are not landowners but would supposedly benefit from this "park", did not feel that it is fair to go as far as as to use eminent domain to force private landowners to sell.

It cannot be "fair" market value we're forced to sell at when present values of these properties are still hovering at half of

59.3

what most of us purchased the parcels for in the first place. Most of us are just middle class or lower middle class workers for whom making this investment in ca. 1970 dollars represented a sacrifice, a struggle financially

We were quite frankly exploited then when the land was sold to us, in the sense that promises were made about the gradual, eventual increase in value due to continuation of the airport nearby, which of course we are still waiting for. Now after all these years it seems we are suddenly being exploited again by what we can't help feeling is a "land grab" under the guise of a project that not even the alleged beneficiaries are in favor of.

59.4

Please do not "railroad" this plan through in an unfair manner. We need more time than 60 days to bring all the issues out into the open among all landowners, area residents, off road vehicle users and public officials.

Let us proceed in a fair, deliberate, democratic fashion, not in a grand rush.

59.5

-Sincerely

Estela S Tritto
ESTELA S TRITTO
(212) 255 5493

Thomas Tritto
(M) THOMAS TRITTO
(212) 355 0669

60

United States Hang Gliding Assn., Inc.
P.O. Box 8300, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80933 (719) 632-8300 (719) 632-8417 FAX

April 10, 1990

Mr Alden Sievers
United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, California 92311

Dear Mr Sievers:

As a Director of the United States Hang Gliding Association, I would like to commend the Bureau of Land Management for the positive role it is playing in the preservation of recreational opportunities on and around El Mirage dry lake. As you know, this historic area has hosted hang gliding (as well as many other forms of recreation) for decades.

Sports such as hang gliding, motor cycling, off road and off highway vehicle riding, land sailing, model airplanes, gyrocopters and others, require specific geographic and topographic settings not available in metropolitan areas. Through the establishment of areas such as that called for in the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area, taxpayers and their families may continue to pursue these legitimate sports activities in a recognized and responsible manner.

On behalf of the 8000 members of the United States Hang Gliding Association, I wish to express our strong support of this truly important project.

Respectfully;

Joe Greblo
Director

61

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAY -1 AM 11: 37
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

April 27, 1990

Mr. Mark Davis
U. S. Bureau of Land Mgmt.
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311

Dear Mark:

Because I was unable to attend the recent public hearings on the El Mirage Recreation Plan I am writing this letter to assure you of my enthusiastic support of the final report that resulted from the work of the El Mirage Study Group of which I was a part.

I'm confident that Southern California Soaring Association, a long time recreational user of El Mirage Dry Lake, joins me in support of the plan.

Hopefully, full implementation of the project will be possible at an early date.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Vance

62

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 MAY -1 AM 11: 37
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

231 Loma Metisse
Malibu, CA 90265
April 27, 1990

Alden Sievers, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, California 92311-3221

Leon Chauvet, Deputy Director OHMVR Divison
California Department of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, California 942996-0001

Mr. Steven K. Messerli, Regional Director
San Bernardino County Parks Department
825 East 3rd Street
San Bernardino, California 92415-0833

Marsha Turoci - Board of Supervisors or your local assemblyman
County Government Center
385 North Arrowhead Avenue
5th Floor
San Bernardino, California 92415-0110

Dear Sirs:

I have just reviewed the "Draft Managerial Plan for El Mirage" dated March 1990. I have the following comments:

PAGE 62

Remark: Land acquisition at $9,452.
Comment: I presume this to be $9.452 million. If this is correct, it works out to be $788 per acre for the stated, on page 11 12,000 acres. I personally will buy land in 40 acre parcels, or larger, for $1,000 per acre. I will also buy the 2.5 acre parcels, approximately 800, for $1,750 per acre. I buy land to make a profit on the resale. In summary, your acquisition budget is unreasonable. 62.1

PAGE 6

Remark: Current estimated recreation use is 110,000 visits per year.
Comment: Page 54 states that 20% of all use in May, and that 45% of that use is on Sunday. Translated this means the subject area has 2,475 visitors each Sunday. (110,000 x 20% x 45% x 25%) I would guess the real number to be approximately 10 percent of your "current estimate", or approximately 50 to 300 visitors vs 2,475 per each Sunday in May. How valid is your estimate? 62.2

PAGE TWO

PAGE 22

Remark: Recreation Activities that are allowable.
Comment: On page 54 it is stated the area could provide 450,000 visitor use days. I do not see how you can permit this extensive use with no Environmental Impact Report. 62.3

PAGE 27

Remark: "Issue gate keys...."
Comment: Do you really think issuing approximately 1,000 keys will work? 62.4

PAGE 31

Remark: Volunteer Program
Comment: I feel a volunteer program is an unrealistic expectation based on the area and type of user. 62.5

PAGE 34

Remark: "...clear off vegetation...lake bed surface"
Comment: Can you do this with no E.I.R.? 62.6

PAGE 49

Remark: Perimeter Barrier (wire rope and smooth wire)
Comment: The O.H.V. (Off-Highway Vehicles) would tear them out or use bolt cutters. In addition, you are inviting lawsuits from injuries. 62.7

PAGE 52

Remark: "The restrooms will be pumped at least once a year"
Comment: With an anticipated use of 22,000 visitors in May, this comment, in my opinion, appears blatantly ridiculous. 62.8

I am personally very disappointed at the thought that has gone into this project based on my comments. How do you feel about the project in light of my comments???

Sincerely,

Jerry Vogler

63

RECEIVED
MAR 30 4 8 00

March 28, 1990

Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area Office
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, Ca 92311

RE: El Mirage Cooperative Management Area Plan

Dear BLM:

My family and I have enjoyed using the El Mirage dry lake area for many years and do not want to see it fenced off or restricted in any way. Let us continue to have unrestricted access to this beautiful desert playground. w1.1

Sincerely,

Michael J. Wasnea and Family
2067 Woodglen Street
Simi Valley, Ca 93065

64

THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

CALIFORNIA/NEVADA REGIONAL OFFICE

May 1, 1990

Alden Sievers
Area Manager
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow CA 92311-3221

RE: Draft Plan for El Mirage Cooperative Management Area

Dear Mr. Sievers:

Thank you for sending us the Draft Plan for the El Mirage area. The Wilderness Society is interested in the management and problems of resources in this area.

As your document points out, there are a variety of resources in the El Mirage Management area, including wildlife, plant, cultural, recreation and visual values which need consideration during the management planning.

Please keep us informed of all activities associated with the El Mirage Area.

Yours truly,

Louis Blumberg
Acting Regional Director

elmirage
\desert

A MONTGOMERY, SUITE 526, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105
(415) 541-9144

65

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
1990 APR 30 AM 8:45
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
BARSTOW, CA

Harry E Wilson
2120 N Callow Ave
Bremerton, WA 98312-2908
April 26, 1990

Area Manager
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311-3221

Dear Sir

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Management Plan for El Mirage Cooperative Management Area.

On page 54, Hazard reduction, are any of the installations eligible for nomination to the historic register? w3.1

What provisions have been made for a gas or oil spill on the lake bed? What effect would a spill have on the environment? w3.2

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely

Harry E Wilson
2120 N Callow Ave
Bremerton, WA 98312-2908

66

TOM ZACHARIO
7311 So. Halldale Ave.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90047
Telephone (213)7588686

RECEIVED
1990 MAR 8 PM 8 00

March 15, 1990

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BARSTOW RESOURCE AREA
150 COOLWATER LANE
BARSTOW, CALIFORNIA 92311-3221

RE: 8340.A (El Mirage) (CA-068.60

Dear Sir/Madam

On March 5,1990, I received a letter from your office informing me of your management of the above-mentioned properties.

In response to your invitation, I am requesting a copy of the draft Management Plan. I would also like to request any assistance in obtaining information as related to the sale of the land owned. It is my intention to sell as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
Tom Zacharo
TOM ZACHARIO

REGIONAL PARKS DEPARTMENT

825 East Third Street • San Bernardino, CA 92415-0833 • (714) 387-2594

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL
PUBLIC WORKS AGENCY

STEVEN K. MESSERLI
Director

67

June 28, 1990

Mr. Alden Sievers
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311-3221

Subject: El Mirage Cooperative Management Area Draft Management Plan Comment Summary

Dear Mr. Sievers:

As you are aware, the San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department has received almost 140 letters of comment during the public response period regarding the Draft Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. 67.1

The majority of letters received by Regional Parks were similar in text and viewpoint, and were mailed on behalf of the El Mirage Landowners, located in Los Angeles, California. In summary, the majority of the letters placed much emphasis on the following items (in no order of priority):

1. Inadequate communication between the involved public agencies and the majority of absentee landowners in the management area.

2. Concern over the process by which actual appraisal and land acquisition will occur in the management area; with particular emphasis on the use of eminent domain and how it could/would apply to the landowners and parcels in question.

3. Lack of adequately prepared environmental documentation involving the specific areas of endangered species, airborne particulate matter, vehicle emissions and noise levels in and around the management area. 67.2

4. Inaccuracy in overall project costs, with possible areas of omission in a contingency category for potential litigation.

5. Concern, if the management area is successful, that instances of vandalism and trespass will increase; and concern, if the management area is unsuccessful, that trespass will increase and the land will be sold to private developers.

Most of these comments are represented as found on a copy of the form letter received by the department, enclosed with this letter. We have also included for your files a copy of the departmental response to the members of the El Mirage landowners based in Los Angeles, and a complete list of those to whom we sent letters.

Through our involvement with the Management Area as part of the El Mirage Steering Committee, the Regional Parks Department has thoroughly reviewed the draft document and can find no significant impacts or problems with the text.

We look forward to seeing a valuable addition in recreation management being designated in the El Mirage Area and also working with you to achieve this common goal.

Sincerely,

GERRY NEWCOMBE
Chief of Administration

GN:cs

Enc.

cc: Phil Krause, Park Planner II

File: 30-5

EL MIRAGE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
HCR 10 BOX 152
ADELANTO, CALIFORNIA 92301

68

July 15, 1990

Mark Davis
150 Coolwater Ln.
Barstow, Calif. 92311

Dear Mr. Davis

The El Mirage Improvement Association, being concerned with the development of the proposed off road vehicle park here in El Mirage, recently asked its members as to their opinion, for or against the project. Individual post cards were sent to each member of the E.M.I.A. so that a all members could vote, nonresidents as well as residents. The following represent the results of that poll; 43 votes (63%) for the park, 25 votes (37%) against the park.

The biggest reason people seam to be against the park is that they don't believe that the BLM can keep people inside the park.

The main reason that people voted for the park is that they think that more control and enforcement will keep people inside the park and off of private property. They also believe that the park will attract a better class of visitor, who in turn will cause fewer problems for the community of El Mirage.

We of course cannot speak for the entire community of El Mirage. But we wanted you to know, that for the most part, we the members of the E.M.I.A. support the off road vehicle park here in our community.

Sincerely

Bill Ressegue
President of the E.M.I.A.

APPENDIX A

RESOURCE DATA

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The resource data evaluates the resources and their uses within the Management Area and the zone of influence. The resources evaluated comprise the affected environment. The impacts to the affected environment have been analyzed in the environmental assessment.

I. NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES

A. Climate

Weather recording stations at nearby Edwards and George Air Force Bases indicate the affected environment has a typical continental high desert climate with hot and dry summers, and cool and dry winters. On an average of 113 days per year the temperature is about 90 F. Freezing temperatures occur approximately 50 days per year, usually during winter night-time hours.

Prevailing winds are from the west-southwest at ten miles per hour; however, high surface winds (35 mph) with occasional gusts of more than 70 miles per hour are frequent.

In this region of the desert the evaporation rate is greater than the total amount of precipitation. The annual rainfall occurs in two distinct periods and averages between five and six inches a year. During November through April rains are usually a result of cold Pacific marine air intrusions. Three or four snow storms are common each winter. During July through October moisture is received from warm tropical continental air masses. The air masses often produce thunderstorms and may result in intense flash floods.

B. Topography

The topography of the affected environment is varied, ranging from a flat, dry lakebed to rugged hills. El Mirage Dry Lake is located in the southwest portion of the Management Area at an elevation of 2,830 feet above sea level. The highest point, at 3,996 feet, is an unnamed peak in the Shadow Mountains approximately four miles north-east of the dry lake. The Shadow Mountains are divided into two distinct ridgelines, the north and south, which are separated by a valley where Shadow Mountain Village is located. The north ridgeline is outside of the Management Area.

There is one major wash within the affected environment. It runs west to east and drains the Shadow Mountain Valley east into Fremont Wash and the Mojave River. No major washes exist within the Management Area. Small washes exist at higher elevations (in the Shadow Mountains) and fan out before they reach the lakebed.

C. Vegetation

No known state or federally-listed threatened, or endangered plant species are known to exist in the affected environment. No candidate species are known to be present. California listed sensitive plant species that have a low potential for being in the affected environment include Chorizanthe spinosa, Cymopterus deserticola, and Eriophyllum mohavense. The north-east corner of the zone of influence contains about 8,300 acres of the Western Mojave Desert Mojave Saltbush unusual plant assemblage.

Vegetation in the affected environment consists of three basic types: Creosotebush Scrub, Mojave Saltbush-Allscale Scrub, and Iodinebush-Alkali Scrub; each typical of the western Mojave Desert.

Creosotebush Scrub

Creosotebush Scrub represents approximately 80% of the vegetation in the affected environment. This vegetation type is found on a wide variety of soils ranging from finely divided, poorly drained, to coarser well drained associations. Creosote (Larrea tridentata) is the dominant species of this assemblage. Associated species include Burrobush (Ambrosia dumosa), Cheesebush (Hymenoclea salsola), Anderson Thornbush (Sycium andersonii), Beavertail, Cholla and Cotton top cactus (Opuntia basilaris, Opuntia echiniocarpa, and Echinocactus polycephalus), Joshua tree (Yucca brevifolia), and Nevada joint-tea (Ephedra nevadensis).

Mojave Saltbush - Allscale Scrub

This vegetation type is restricted to a small area on the west side of El Mirage Lake extending north and south along the west boundary of the Management Area (2% of the total). This assemblage is found in mildly alkaline soils. Mojave Saltbush (Atriplex spinifera) is the dominant species and is usually found in association with Allscale (Atriplex polycarpa), Winterfat (Ceratoides lanata), Horsebush (Tetradymia glabrata) and Joshua tree (Yucca brevifolia).

Iodinebush - Alkali Scrub

The Iodinebush-Alkali Scrub within the affected environment (18% of the totatl) is restricted to the shoreline of El Mirage Dry Lake where the soils are highly alkaline. The dominant species of this vegetation type is Iodinebush (Allenroflea occidentalis). Associated species include Mojave Seablite (Sualda torreyana), Alkali Scaton (Sporobolus airiodes), Utah Swampfire (Salicornia utahensis) and Atriplex spp.

D. Wildlife

Vegetation species diversity is low within the three vegetative

associations comprising the affected environment. This in turn produces animal populations that are not diverse with regards to the numbers of different species. Water is very scarce within the affected environment further limiting animal species and distribution.

Other factors affecting wildlife habitat quality within the affected environment include seasonal grazing by domestic sheep, localized mineral exploration and development, a prolonged area drought that has lasted for the preceding three years, and the introduction of several invasive plant species such as Russian thistle (Salsola iberica), filaree (Eridium cicutarium), and schismus (Schismus sp.).

In addition, numerous sections of private land within the boundaries of the Management Area have been subdivided. In the late 1960's roads were graded and water diversion structures constructed in these areas. There are over 65 miles of graded roads associated with this type of existing development within the Management Area. These disturbed areas provide excellent opportunities for OHV play and are intensively used as such.

Several of these factors have a negative affect on wildlife within the affected environment. Even so, there is still a variety of species present, some of which may be found in large numbers. Typical mammal species present within the affected environment include the black-tailed jackrabbit, coyote, kangaroo rat, the desert wood rat, and the Antelope Valley ground squirrel.

Common bird species that use the habitats adjacent to the dry lakebed include the mourning dove, common raven, roadrunner, cactus wren, red-tailed hawk, loggerhead shrike, horned owl, burrowing owl, black-throated sparrow, blue-gray gnatcatcher, yellow-rumped warbler, horned lark and LeConte's thrasher.

Reptiles commonly present in areas that contain these three vegetative associations include the desert tortoise, zebra-tailed lizard, Mojave rattlesnake, Mojave green rattlesnake, sidewinder rattlesnake, gopher snake, racer snake, and the horned lizard.

Two terrestrial vertebrate species are of special management concern in the affected environment. The Mohave ground squirrel is listed by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) as threatened. The desert tortoise was emergency listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1989 and was formally listed as threatened in April, 1990. The desert tortoise is considered threatened by the CDFG.

The entire affected environment is within the range of the Mohave ground squirrel. The highest population densities occur farther to the north and west of the lakebed. Records indicate that in

1980 a Mojave ground squirrel was trapped in Sec. 8, T.7N., R.6W., north of the Management Area, and another one was trapped in Sec. 24, T.6N., R.6W., south of El Mirage Road and the Management Area.

The desert tortoise (Xerobates agassizii) historically occurred throughout the Management Area. Based upon density estimates contained in Berry (1984; Plate 2-2; "Tortoise Densities in the California Desert Conservation Area"), tortoise densities ranged from 0 to 250 per square mile. The entire El Mirage Cooperative Management Area is within areas designated by BLM as Category III (interim) desert tortoise habitat. The intent of management in Category III habitat is to apply measures to mitigate for actions affecting the desert tortoise and its habitat, but not to manage for long-term viable populations.

There is one tortoise transect (transect No 253) located within the boundary of the Management Area. There are four other transects located in the immediate vicinity (See Table 1). These transects were last read in 1978 and were used in the development of maps and figures for Berry (1984). Utilizing this data, there were an estimated 2,939 desert tortoises within the Management Area when the California Desert Conservation Area Plan was completed in 1980.

Table 1. El Mirage Desert Tortoise Data

TRANSECT NO.	DATE	SUMMARY
253	1977	No tortoise, no sign
254	1977	11 burrows, 8 scats, 1 animal, 1 shell
960	1978	No tortoise, no sign
963	1978	No tortoise, no sign
1087	1978	4 burrows, no scat, no animals, 1 shell

Factoring in a 70% decline presumed throughout the entire Mojave population of desert tortoise, approximately 624 tortoises may currently remain within the Management Area. However, given the degree of existing habitat disturbance, the actual numbers of tortoises that may be present would be even lower. It is estimated that approximately 16,360 acres of the 24,400 acre Management Area may contain habitat with varying degrees of suitability for use by desert tortoises.

E. Minerals

According to the CDCA Plan (1980) the affected environment contains a few mineral resources. The classification of land within the

affected environment as a possible source of minerals is based on preliminary evaluation of geologic mineral occurrence, and limited field verification. The potential for these resources is based on the economic feasibility of removal.

The lakebed and lands to the north and south contain sodium. An area of approximately 4,000 acres just east of the lakebed contains limestone. The lakebed, and land a few miles to the north, is also part of a large region that has the potential to contain oil and gas. An area approximately three miles wide, extending a few miles north and south from Shadow Mountain Village, is considered to contain tungsten. There is a drainage northeast of the lakebed that has an identified potential to contain sand and gravel.

F. Cultural

Eight cultural resource locations are known within the Shadow Mountains and along the southern shore of the lakebed, including prehistoric trails, cairns, trail shrines, historic mining remains, historical homestead (circa 1912), flake scatters and several areas of campsites. In general, the area has not been inventoried for cultural remains. All sites located to date are the result of surveys conducted for mining and desert land entry investigations.

No contemporary use of the Shadow Mountains by the Native Americans is known to occur.

G. Visual

The El Mirage Valley is basically intact as a natural and scenic setting. The few visible developments north of the lakebed blend into the natural landscape. The rural and undeveloped nature of El Mirage provides a remote background for visitors to enjoy while recreating and camping.

The lakebed is a popular location for commercial filming, with unobstructed views to the east, north, and west. The view to the south is of alfalfa fields, power lines, roads, and homes. Ruts on the lakebed caused by vehicles driving on it when the surface was wet are a source of visual distraction. The film industry complains that the ruts appear in studio quality photos of products filmed for advertisement, and in movies where the automobile is not intended to exist.

H. Air Quality

The air at El Mirage is generally of good quality. The air is clear with visibility exceeding 25 miles most days of the year. Exceptions occur during strong westerly winds when dust is blowing, and occasionally when smog filters up from the Los Angeles Basin.

I. Noise

The ambient noise level is very low. There are no major ground based sources of noise within the affected environment. This is partly because the Management Area is located in a rural section of the county. The principal sources of noise are highway traffic and aircraft. Highway traffic is confined to El Mirage Road and impacts residents nearest the road.

Aircraft are the primary single source of noise. Throughout the week military aircraft (helicopters, airplanes, and jets) use the airspace over and around the lakebed for training. There is a major east-west commercial air corridor located a few miles south of the affected environment which adds to the aircraft noise. There are also several types of recreational aircraft that takeoff and land on the lakebed. These tend to sound very noisy because they have small engines running at high speed and usually fly at low elevations.

The noise level is not a noticeable factor near or within the Management Area. There are large regions within the affected environment that are very peaceful and tranquil. Often in such places, no ground based noise can be heard, even on the busiest holiday weekend. During the week the lakebed is usually quiet except for the sound of the wind blowing. Over the weekend the noise level rises to reflect the increased use. However, nearly all the ambient noise remains within the Management Area. An exception to this is major holidays when recreation use triples and on the dates when special events are held.

J. Hydrology

Ground water in El Mirage is generally of good quality for both agricultural and domestic use. There are several underground aquifers running through the area. These are located at different depths from the surface and contain water in varying degrees of quality. The Mojave Water Agency places the average pumping depth at 90 feet.

The affected environment is part of the Mojave River drainage which extends from the Antelope Valley 30 miles to the west, to Soda Dry Lake 100 miles to the northeast. This is the remains of an ancient drainage system from the last ice age, and water is likely to follow this path during a major storm.

Most of the affected environment is within a large surface drainage system with El Mirage Dry Lake representing the base level of this ancient drainage. The primary source of this drainage is the San Gabriel Mountains south of the lakebed, and to a lesser extent the Shadow Mountains north of the lakebed. The remaining portion of

the affected environment, east of the Shadow Mountains, drains east across Highway 395 into Fremont Wash.

Winter and spring rains commonly result in standing water on the lakebed. During short intense cloud bursts, water that collects on the lakebed originates from within five miles of the lakebed. When it rains for long periods of time the ground becomes saturated and the runoff increases. Some of the runoff originates 10 to 20 miles away. There are several major washes that drain north from the San Gabriel Mountains to the lakebed. It is possible that during a major rainstorm the lakebed could overfill and drain to the east into Fremont Wash, and eventually the Mojave River. According to topographic maps the water would have to be 30 feet deep on the lakebed for this to happen.

K. Geology

The affected environment is mostly Quaternary-age alluvium with hills and mountains comprised of Paleozoic-age metamorphic rocks intruded by Mesozoic or older granitic rocks. Alluvial deposits in the area are divided into the following units: fanglomerate (boulders and cobbles), older alluvium (gravel and sand of dissected valley fill), and valley sediments (wind-blown sand, playa clay, gravel, sand and silt) derived from the surrounding hills and the San Gabriel Mountains.

Lakebed

The lakebed, also called a playa, is underlain by Quaternary alluvial lake deposits estimated to be over 100 feet deep. Total acreage of the playa is 3,330 acres. The playa extends five miles from east to west, with a maximum width of one and a half miles. The playa is nearly flat, and has less than a one percent slope, with the west end being the lowest. The lakebed is composed of a fine, tightly packed silty clayloam. The fine materials are cemented together with mineral salts, forming an impervious clay.

According to BLM records[1], there has historically been a negligible amount of erosion on the lakebed. There has only been a small amount of erosion (wind or water) because the lakebed is tightly compacted and located at the bottom of a drainage. Over the last thirty years the intensive vehicle use on the lakebed has slowly broken down the top layer of the surface leaving it less compacted. As a result there has been an increase in soil loss through wind erosion. There has also been a slight increase in the formation of gullies as water erodes the softer surface while traveling to the lowest point on the lakebed.

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[1] *Environmental Assessment Record for Commercial Filming - El Mirage Dry Lake 1980.*

Ongoing changes that are occurring to the lakebed include the invasion of vegetation and mounds, and the formation of ruts. Weed seeds locate in cracks in the lakebed, then sprout and grow. The new plant then provides a small windbreak leading to the buildup of dirt around the plant. After a few years this forms a mound with plants growing in it. After a rain, the soil becomes extremely slick and clay-like, with a tendency to form mounds and ruts when altered by vehicle use. When the soil dries, these mounds and ruts harden and remain for years.

Soils

The soils in the affected environment are represented by seven different associations, as shown on **Figure 1.** The Rockland association actually develops very little soil and is composed primarily of exposed rock. This and the Playa association are best suited for recreation and wildlife uses. The remaining five associations are suited for a wide variety of uses including recreation, wildlife, urban development, limited agriculture and limited grazing. The limitations on agriculture and grazing are tied mostly to water availability. The Hesperia association would be considered the best for agriculture.

SOIL ASSOCIATION	PERCENT OCCURRENCE	DEPTH (INCHES)	EROSION HAZARD	INHERENT FERTILITY
Cajon	05	60+	Moderate to High	Low
Hesperia	10	60+	Slight to Moderate	Moderate to high
Mohave-Adelanto Variance	12	24-48	Slight to Moderate	Low
Mohave-Sunrise Variance	48	20-40	Slight to Moderate	Low
Calvista-Hi Vista	03	-	Moderate	Low
Playas	05	-	-	-
Rockland	17	-	-	-

Figure 1

A. Recreation

Visitor Use Statistics

During peak use periods (such as Memorial Day), up to 3,000 primary vehicles have been observed in the affected environment. (A primary vehicle is a street-legal vehicle which transports visitors between their home and their destination.) Each primary vehicle contains an average of 3.5 visitors. For those visitors participating in OHV activities, more than one OHV is normally associated with each primary vehicle. See **Figure 2** for percentage of use by month.

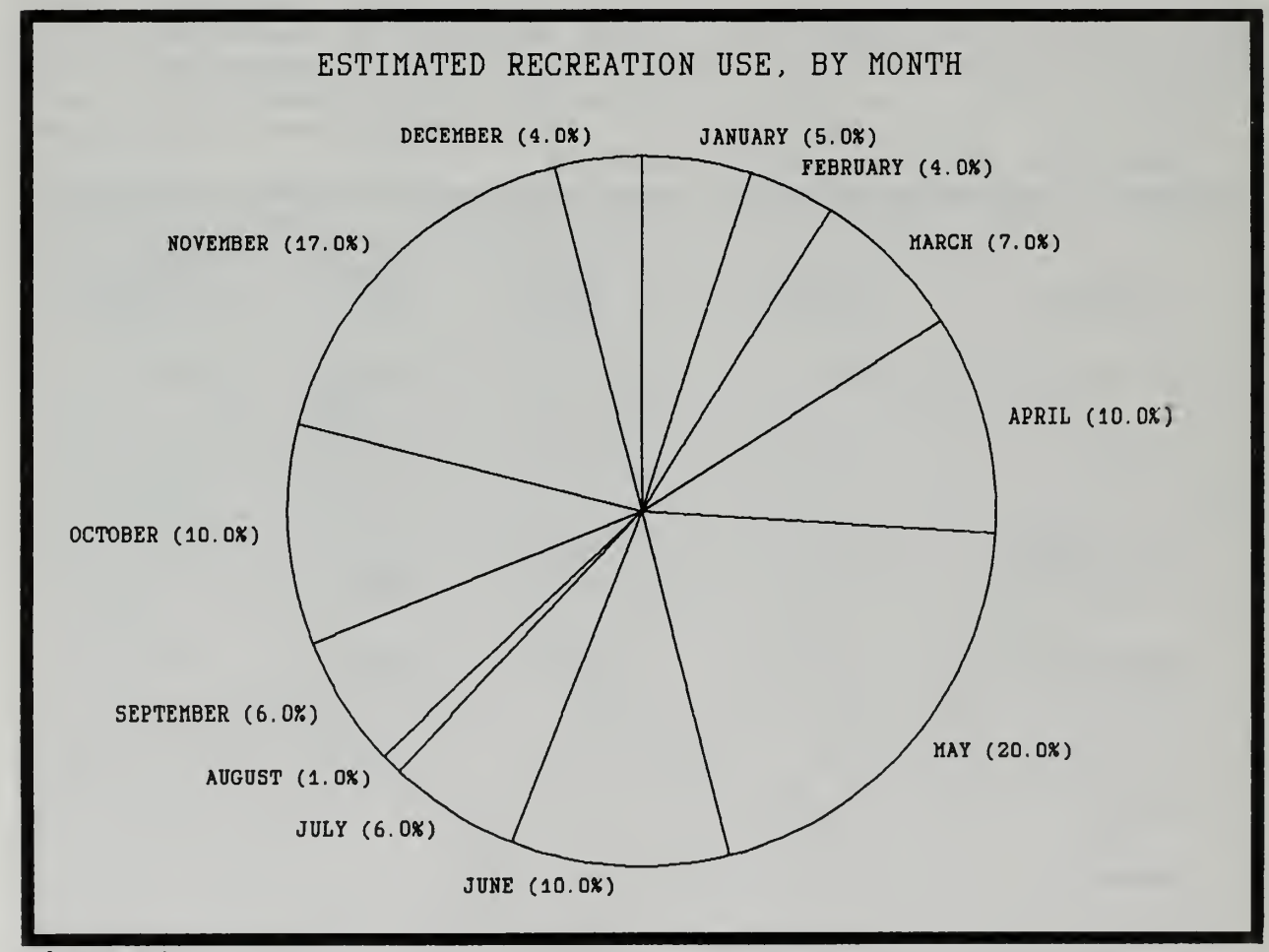

Figure 2

During the high use seasons, spring and fall, approximately 300 primary vehicles visit the area on each weekend day. Recreational use activity is usually higher on Sundays than on Saturdays. See Figure 3 for the percentage of use by days of the week.

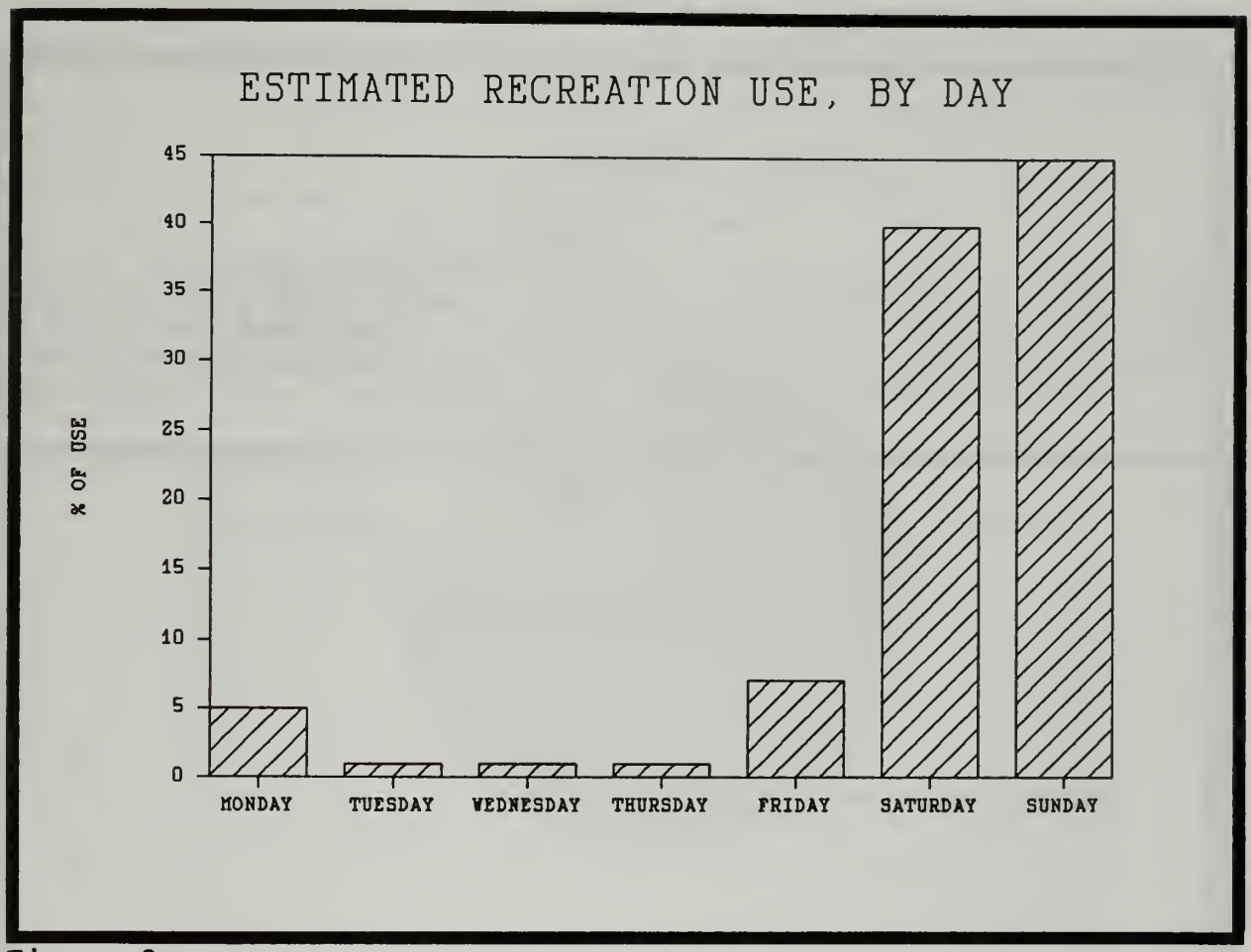

Figure 3

Friday nights during the Spring and Fall usually experience heavy use, particularly during a full moon. This use is attributed to visitors coming out on Friday nights to socialize. These visitors often leave early Saturday. The increase in visitation on Mondays and Fridays over the remaining weekdays is attributed to three-day weekends and overnight campers which arrive before the weekend.

Recreation Activities

Many types of recreational activities occur in the affected environment. See Figure 4 for the percentage of use by type of activity. Activities vary from formal and highly organized vehicle speed timing events to loosely structured activities involving

family groups. The Management Area is a popular day use area for large numbers of people from the Los Angeles metropolitan area. It is common for recreational visitors to participate in more than one activity while visiting the area. When large groups with self-contained camping units set up their campsites, the diversity of recreational interests within such a group is phenomenal. Some

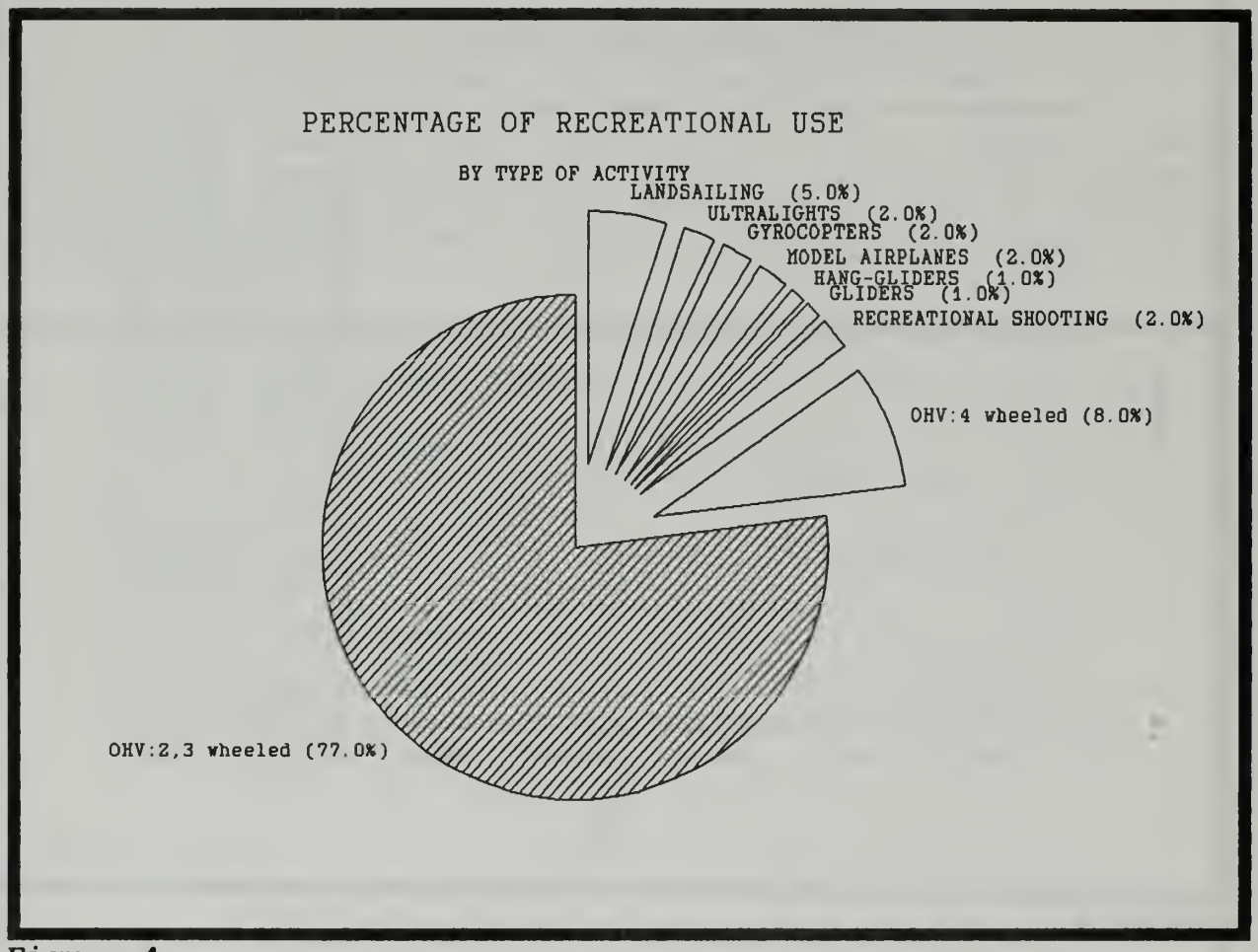

Figure 4

group campsites will have motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, baja bugs and landyachts. Other group campsites may contain ultralights, gyrocopters and assorted OHVs. Individuals learning to fly gyrocopters, gliders, and hang-gliders can be seen being pulled though the air by a cable attached to a tow vehicle.

Other activities observed occurring within the Management Area include kite flying, mountain bike riding, the use of model rockets, hunting, and shooting. Contacts by field personnel with visitors who have claimed to be hunting rabbits has revealed a combination of dangerous and illegal ativities that include:

hunting without a license, using a rifle, using spotlights at night, hunting from a vehicle, and the use of alcoholic beverages while hunting. Field evidence indicates that the majority of rabbits shot are not taken home, but are left to decompose.

Visitors to the Management Area who engage in recreational shooting have left behind piles of trash that contain spent shell casings and used targets. Shot up targets include signs, old TVs, broken bottles, tires, cans, Joshua trees, tortoise, rabbits, birds, and a variity of other wildlife that exist within the area.

Profile of the Recreation Visitors

During May 1986 (including Memorial Day weekend), a survey was taken to establish from which county El Mirage visitors originated. This survey, based on 1,430 visitors contacted, indicates that over one-half of all El Mirage visitors originate in Los Angeles County. See **Figure 5** for the percentage of use by county of origin.

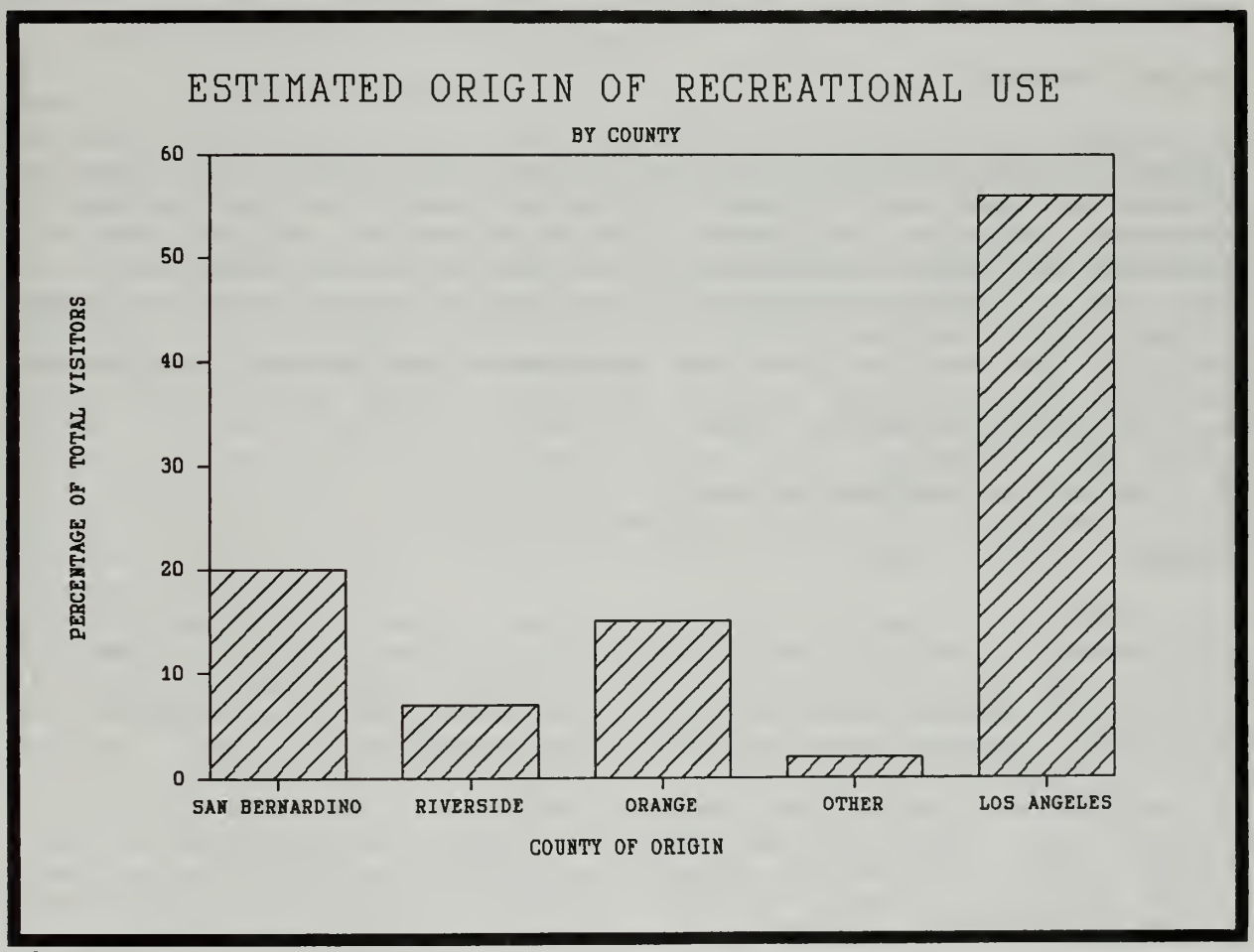

Figure 5

Projected Recreation, 1989 -1998

The Management Area provides recreational opportunities for a wide spectrum of activities and it is close to major population centers (the greater Los Angeles and San Bernardino Basins). Therefore, it is anticipated that use will continue to grow as these population centers continue to grow, relatively independent of other factors. It is likely that as the land surrounding the Management Area develops, day use will continue to increase for both OHV and other uses. The Management Area is also growing as a social setting where young people assemble on the weekends to cruise in cars, play games, picnic, and just "be seen".

Existing uses will continue and most likely expand in scope. The dominate use in the Management Area will remain OHVs. Some uses that will likely increase are model airplanes and rockets, kite flying, landsailors, parasailing, and ultralights. Located in Southern California, the Management Area is subject to the pressure of fads. There is no method to predict fads, so recreational uses may develop which this plan did not specifically anticipate.

Vehicle Access

Approximately 1,280 acres of public land on El Mirage Dry Lake are currently designated multiple use class intensive, with a vehicle access designation of open. Land adjacent to the lakebed is private. However, a few miles to the north and the east are undesignated public lands which are available for disposal.
The land within the Management Area (public and private) is criss-crossed with numerous routes of travel and reflects the intensive OHV play the area has received for over thirty years. Much of the existing use occurs on private property, county maintained roads, and undesignated public lands.

B. Mining and Grazing

Mining

Approximately 157 mining claims have been filed within the affected environment. Only a small portion of these mining claims are active, and there is just one active mining operation, an open pit mine in the Shadow Mountains. Dolomite has been mined here for years and a patent has been filed on the claim.

The Shadow Mountains have produced tungsten, lead, zinc and silver in the past. Most of the tungsten production was from the Just Tungsten quarries, Princess Pat, and Shadow Mountains mines north of the Management Area. A small tonnage of tungsten ore was mined from 1942 to 1955 from the Beacon, Bonanza Dome, and New Discovery claims in Sec. 32, T.7N., R.6W. of the southern Shadow Mountains. Scheelite and tungsten ore have been prospected by open pits since

1943 at the Tungsten Queen, Tungsten King, and Maybell claims in Sec. 28 and 33, T.7N., R.6W., also in the southern Shadow Mountains. Between the late 1920s and 1951, a small tonnage of lead, zinc, and silver was shipped from the Red Raven mine in Sec. 31, T.7N., R.5W., half a mile west of Highway 395. The lakebed contains a large body of clay suitable for pond sealant.

Sheep Grazing

A portion of the Shadow Mountains Grazing Allotment, #8011, is within the Management Area. The allotment contains 36,583 acres of public land. Approximately 20,400 acres of the Management Area are included in the allotment. Of this, approximately 10,600 acres are existing public land, the remainder is private land that is identified for acquisition. The allotment has been classified as ephemeral range. During the spring, when forage is available (usually March through June), sheep can graze the allotment. The maximum number of sheep currently authorized for the allotment is approximately 1,275 for one month or 340 sheep for three months.

C. Authorized Activities

Special Recreation Permits

Currently only one recreation activity is issued a permit for use of public land within the affected environment. This is for the time trials held on the lakebed. There are two other existing activities on the lakebed that will be required to obtain a permit once the land status is adjusted to public ownership.

Vending and Concession Operations

There are two vending operations (sale of refreshments and T shirts) associated with the activities that now and in the future will require special recreation permits. In addition, the operator of an ice cream truck makes infrequent visits to the area. These activities are now occurring on private land. There are no concession operations.

Filming

The lakebed is used by commercial filming companies for photography ranging from still shots for magazine publications to motion pictures for television commercials, movies, and feature length films. Permits are issued by the BLM for filming throughout the year. The summer months receive the heaviest use as the auto makers produce commercials for the next year's new cars. Use of the lakebed for shooting musical videos has soared in recent years. Fees paid to the BLM from commercial filming activities presently average about $10,000 per year.

Research and Development

Several firms currently use the lakebed and the land around it for testing and developing a wide range of products. Permits are generally issued for anywhere from a single day to two years. Firms engaged in research and development prefer to maintain a low profile to avoid attention, and therefore, often they cannot be distinguished from the recreational users. Firms issued permits in 1988 include two major OHV manufactures, a company working on a remote control spy plane, and a firm testing sails.

Educational Uses

Educational use of the Management Area primarily consists of students completing film projects. In addition, a graduate student from a mid-west college completed his dissertation on the geology of the Shadow Mountains. Such activities are authorized under the BLM permitting process.

Military Uses

The military bases in the high desert occasionally perform exercises that include the use of the Management Area. These exercises typically involve a few vehicles, an airplane, and approximately a half dozen paratroopers. In addition, every other year the lakebed is included in Operation Gallant Eagle, a major training exercise involving all branches of the military. During this exercise up to one hundred paratroopers are dropped over the lakebed. The soldiers are then picked up by personnel carriers. These activities are authorized under the BLM's permitting process.

Rights-of-way

Energy Production and Utility Corridor "P" (two miles wide) runs along HWY 395 through the eastern part of the Management Area. Originally established as a contingency corridor in the CDCA Plan, it was activated to full corridor status by the environmental impact statement and record of decision for the Meade-Adelanto 500 KV transmission line.

A small tract Lease (RO - 7697) exists on the S1/2 SW1/4 SW1/4 NW1/4 of sec. 12, T.6N., R.7W. The lease was issued on June 2, 1966. The lease expired on November 8, 1976, with a notation in the records that a trespass case be established.

III. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

A. Land Tenure

The Management Area will contain approximately 24,000 acres of public land upon completion of the acquisition program (Figure 1). Currently a little over half the land within the Management Area is in federal ownership. There are approximately 634 parcels of private land to be acquired within the Management Area. The central inholding contains approximately 671 additional parcels of private land. The parcels range in size from small 2.5 acre plots, to large plots with 320 acres.

	Acres	Percent
Zone of Influence	57,034	100.00
Public Land	17,597	30.85
Private Land	39,437	69.15
Management Area	24,405	100.00
Public Land	12,558	51.46
Private Land	11,847	48.54
Private Inholding Area	3,025	-
Management Area (w/o central inholding)	21,363	100.00
Public Land	12,558	59.16
Private Land	8,805	40.84

Figure 1

There are four occupied parcels within the boundaries. Two of these are located within the private inholding. With one exception there are no county maintained roads, or services (power, water, phone) within the Management Area.

B. Local Communities

El Mirage

The community of El Mirage forms the southern boundary of the Management Area. El Mirage has a population of approximately 165 families. The area experienced slow growth through the mid 1980's, however, since then development has increased at a more rapid pace. Most of the land is zoned D.L. (desert living) and there is an increasing amount of single family homes in the community.

Two restaurants serve the local community. Other businesses in El Mirage include Aerochem (industrial plant), a private airport (closed to public use), a real estate office, an insurance company, a landscaping business, two dairy farms, a feed store, a christmas tree farm, an airplane salvage yard, and approximately 1,000 acres

of alfalfa farming. There are a few additional small businesses operating out of private residences, and new businesses are forming at the rate of approximately three a year.

Shadow Mountain Village

Shadow Mountain Village is approximately one and one half miles north of the Management Area, snuggled in a quiet valley between the Shadow Mountains. The community is bisected by Shadow Mountain Road, which is not paved between HWY 395 and the Los Angeles/San Bernardino County line. The Village has a population of approximately ten families. The area is serviced with electricity, but no telephone service, to date. A few of the residents have recently sunk wells and reached potable water. There are no business establishments in the village.

C. Emergency Services

Medical Services

Currently, emergency medical service is being provided within the affected environment through an interagency dispatch agreement among the BLM, California Department of Forestry (CDF), California Highway Patrol (CHP), San Bernardino County Sheriff, El Mirage Volunteer Fire Department (E.M.V.F.D.), and Victor Valley Ambulance. Under this agreement the nearest available unit from each of these agencies will respond to a serious medical emergency within the Management Area or the zone of influence.

The community of El Mirage provides emergency medical service through a volunteer fire department equipped with one engine, two EMT-1s, and several firefighters trained as first responders. A rescue unit from the California Department of Forestry in Phelan, 15 miles south of the zone of influence, is also available to respond to emergency medical situations.

The nearest available ambulance service with an assigned paramedic is located in Victorville, 25 miles away. No medical or ambulance service is available from the City of Adelanto or nearby George Air Force Base. Hospitals are located in Victorville and Palmdale. Major trauma victims are usually transported by helicopter to either Loma Linda or San Bernardino County Hospital.

Firefighting Services.

Fire protection is provided by the El Mirage Volunteer Fire Department (paid call) and the California Department of Forestry (CDF). BLM has contracted with CDF for fire protection on public lands within the affected environment. Adelanto, George AFB, and other fire agencies are available to respond to fire emergencies through mutual aid agreements.

The El Mirage Volunteers have an engine stationed in El Mirage and are completing plans for constructing a fire station at the intersection of El Mirage and Airport roads. The CDF station nearest the lakebed is located 15 miles to the south in Phelan. It contains two engines and a rescue squad. There is a county fire station with two engines and a rescue squad ten miles east of the Management Area at Silver Lakes. The City of Adelanto, eight miles east of the access road, has a permanent full-time fire department with two engines, a water tanker, and a rescue squad.

A BLM Fire Center is located in Apple Valley, 30 miles to the southeast, and is available to assist CDF when requested. During the fire season (April through November), a helicopter is stationed at the BLM Fire Center, as are two Type 3 fire engines and a water tanker. There is a small air tanker (on contract) located at the Apple Valley Airport that is set up for making water/retardant airdrops. Full size aerial tankers are stationed at Foxfield in Lancaster, about 10 minutes flight time to the west and at Hemet, about 20 minutes flight time to the south.

APPENDIX B

PERMIT GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

PERMIT GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

General Procedures

A system will be developed to track uses and events within the management area. This will include publishing event dates in the semi-monthly newsletter.

Permits issued for recreation and commercial uses entitle the holder of the permit to limit public access where necessary to facilitate the needs of the permitted activity. It is the responsibility of the permitted party to secure any areas where public access is limited.

The lake bed will be delineated into six permit sections for the purpose of issuing permits (Illustration 7). The permit section corners will be identified by sunken markers at ground level. The mud play area east of the lake bed is available for use by permit, however it is not considered as one of the permit sections of the lake bed.

The speed limit in the mud play area is 25 MPH, except for use associated with a permit. The mud play area is available for use at anytime and may be filled with water from an outside source for use in association with a permit.

Persons, businesses, or organizations engaging in a permitted activity must have the proper permits. All permitted activities must comply with the rules and regulations of the Bureau, and other agencies with the appropriate jurisdiction. Bonding may be required to ensure the BLM has the recourse to repair environmental damage resulting from actions in non-compliance.

When a portion of the lake bed is wet, permits will be restricted or cancelled as conditions require. Fees paid in advance will either be refunded or applied to a permit for a different date.

Special Recreation Permits (SRPs)

SRPs will be issued for competitive and non-competitive recreation events throughout the management area in compliance with 43 CFR, subpart 8372. Applications must be received 120 days in advance of the event and contain, among other items, proof of liability insurance.

Permitted events that involve vehicles travelling at potentially high rates of speed will either be limited to the lake bed or not allowed. Permit applications for educational uses must be accompanied by a letter of intent from the educational institution; fees may be waived.

SRPs will not be issued on National Holidays with the following exceptions:
(a) Martin Luther King Weekend
(b) President's Day Weekend
(c) Fourth of July
(d) Labor Day Weekend

There is no limit to the number of SRPs that may be issued for the use of one permit section of the lake bed. A maximum of only four of the six permit sections of the lake bed will be available for exclusive use by permit on a holiday or weekend day; all six sections are available Monday through Friday. A maximum of only 16 SRPs will be issued per year that require the use of more than one permit section of the lake bed. A maximum of 10 SRPs will be issued per year for use of the mud play area.

The dates for permits may be reserved in advance through the existing BLM Desert District office lottery system. Based on historical use the following organizations will have the privilege of selecting the dates for their permits in the following order:
(a) Six dates are reserved for the Southern California Timing Association.
(b) One date is reserved for the United Gyrocopters Association.
(c) Two dates are reserved for the American Landsailing Federation.

Seven permit dates for use requiring more than one permit section of the lake bed will thus be available in the lottery system. The lottery system will be evaluated on a yearly basis to assure that it is meeting the needs of the visitors and the user organizations.

Land Use Permits (LUPs)

LUPs will be issued in accordance with 43 CFR subpart 2920.1. Permits may be issued for commercial and non-profit use throughout the management area, provided the permitted activities are compatible with recreational uses.

Within the management area LUPs will be issued by legal definition, with the exception of the lake bed where they may be issued by the six permit sections. A maximum of 6 LUPs may be issued for the lake bed on one particular day.

Weekend permits may be issued for commercial activities that require less than one acre on the lake bed, or less than 5 acres throughout the rest of the management area.

Vending

Land use permits will be issued, according to 43 CFR subpart 2920.1, to authorize the sale of foods, goods, and services by

vendors within the management area using the following criteria: Vending operations are to be operated within a 1/2 mile radius of an existing restroom facility (Illustration 8); except where a vending operation is associated with a permitted activity. Prior to construction of the restroom facilities vendors may locate at a site with the approval of the project manager.

Vendors must comply with the standard permit stipulations, plus any specific stipulations. Permits are non-transferable.

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTAL RULES

SUPPLEMENTAL RULES

The following reflects the intent of supplemental rules which will be implemented to protect the health and safety of the visitors and the natural environment. The final wording will reflect legal standards and definitions as appropriate. Information relative to these rules will be available in the Management Area brochures. Signs will be posted prior to enforcement. These rules will be re-evaluated on a regular basis to determine appropriateness. Changes will be made accordingly.

1. Any activity that interferes with the operations of an authorized activity by blocking access, operating in a restricted area, creating undue noise, causing dust to blow, or obstructing the view, shall be prohibited.

2. The discharge of rifles, pistols, and shotguns, or any other firearms, shall be prohibited within the Management Area.

3. The landing or taking off of aircraft shall be prohibited on the lakebed from 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise.

4. It shall be prohibited to camp within one hundred feet of the perimeter barrier, except in sections 13 and 14 of T.7N, R.6W., where camping is prohibited within 500 feet of the perimeter barrier.

5. It shall be prohibited to camp in, on, or within any of the facilities. It shall also be prohibited to camp within the perimeter fence at the headquarters complex.

6. On the lakebed it shall be prohibited to camp further than one hundred feet from the natural shore (including jetties, mounds, and islands), except as authorized by permit.

7. Camping shall be prohibited in sections 13 and 14 of T.7N., R.6W., except with a permit.

8. It shall be prohibited to park a vehicle or to have a campfire within 25 feet of a Joshua Tree.

9. It shall be prohibited to violate any stipulations of a permit, either a special recreation permit or a land use permit.

10. It shall be prohibited to violate temporary closures. Temporary closures may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the lakebed during windstorms and routes of travel during conservation repairs.

11. It shall be prohibited to disobey any sign.

12. It shall be prohibited to posses or use any glass container or cup, empty or not, for carrying any liquid for drinking purposes.

13. On the ground, non-motorized vehicles shall have the right-of-way over motorized vehicles.

APPENDIX D

LAKEBED REPAIR STANDARDS

LAKEBED SURFACE REPAIR STANDARDS

1. **Repair of holes in the lakebed surface.**

   a. All fill material must be of the same composition as the lakebed surface.

   b. The fill material is to be broken up into a fine consistency with no clumps larger than 1" allowed.

   c. The area/hole to be repaired is to be moistened with water immediately prior to any fill material being added.

   d. Only six (6) inches of fill material at a time is to be added to a depression, and then enough water is to be added to moisten the fill material, but no more than can be absorbed in a few minutes. The repair of a deep hole is to be completed by adding another six inches of fill at a time, and then wetting each layer with water.

   e. The final 6 inches of fill material is not to be wet down until the repaired area is compacted. The vehicle used to compact the fill material must have a minimum gross weight of 2,000 pounds.

   f. Upon filling in the depression, the entire repaired area plus a minimum of an additional 12" around the perimeter of the depression, is to be wet down to the point where the water puddles and does not immediately soak in.

   g. The hole is to be filled so that after final compaction and wetting the repair material will rise 1" above the surrounding lakebed surface for every 2' of depth of the original hole.

   h. The persons/company responsible for the repair are to provide all the equipment, materials, and water necessary for the repair.

   i. The Bureau of Land Management will provide a person to inspect the mitigation. The repair is not considered complete until a final inspection is made by Bureau personnel.

2. **Repair of vehicle ruts while the lakebed surface is wet.**

   a. Damaged made to the lakebed surface while it is wet is best repaired while the lakebed is still wet. This is accomplished with hand tools similar to a bull float used

for finishing concrete. The BLM can provide the tools and will supervise their use.

b. The Bureau of Land Management will provide a person to inspect the mitigation. The repair is not considered complete until a final inspection is made by Bureau personnel.

APPENDIX E

FORMAL CONSULTATION MEMORANDUM

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FIELD STATION
Ventura Office
2140 Eastman Avenue, Suite 100
Ventura, California 93003

June 25, 1990

Memorandum

To: State Director, Bureau of Land Management, Sacramento, California

From: Office Supervisor

Subject: Formal Consultation on the Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area (6840 2800 (CA-932.1)) (1-6-90-F-36)

This Biological Opinion responds to your request for formal consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). Your request was dated December 14, 1989 and received by us on December 18, 1989. At issue are the Impacts that the Bureau of Land Management's (Bureau) Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area may have on the desert tortoise (Gopherus agassizii), a federally listed threatened species. This consultation was temporarily suspended in April, 1990 to allow the Service and Bureau to revise the estimations of potential take of tortoises and habitat, and to refine the measures the Bureau would employ to minimize incidental take resulting the action's impacts.

This Biological Opinion was prepared using information: contained in your December 14, 1989 request for consultation to the Service's Regional Director regarding the proposed action; obtained during Informal consultation between our staffs, including an on-site meeting on May 16, 1990 between Paul McClain and Mark Davis of the Barstow Resource Area and Ray Bransfield of my staff; supplied in a memorandum from the Barstow Resource Area to our office, dated June 21, 1990; and contained in our files.

Biological Opinion

It is the opinion of the Service that the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the desert tortoise.

Project Description

The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area (Area) is located in San Bernardino County, approximately 20 miles northwest of Victorville. The Bureau's proposed action is the implementation of a cooperative management agreement for the 24,400 acre Area with the Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Off-highway Vehicle Motorized Vehicle Recreation Commission. The purpose of the proposed action is to concentrate various public uses of the approximately 100,000 acres surrounding El Mirage Dry Lake into a well-defined unit. Currently, unregulated public use has resulted in widespread trespass on private land, numerous health and safety problems, and significant, widespread damage to natural resources.

The management proposal is multi-faceted and primary includes, but is not limited to, tasks such as: providing signing, law enforcement, emergency medical assistance, and other visitor services; acquisition of 12,000 acres of private lands and right-of-way easements; construction of a boundary barricade, entry stations, and vault toilets; improving access; and the development of monitoring programs.

Implementation of the management actions is scheduled to begin in September, 1990 with the first phase of land acquisition, which is projected to last five years. The second acquisition phase will begin upon completion of the initial effort. All acquisition is tied to the availability of funding. Construction activities associated with the management program are expected to be conducted between July, 1991 and July, 1992.

The Bureau has proposed, as part of the project, measures to minimize the take of tortoises. These measures are summarized briefly below:

A. Prior to the signing of the Management Plan, the Bureau will issue an order to close routes (any path, trail, or road used by motorized vehicles) in the Zone of Influence with the exception of the routes indicated in Figure 1. This will include twelve full and two partial sections of Bureau land north of the Management Area which are immediately south of a consolidation zone, as proposed by the Bureau's Western Mojave Land Tenure Adjustment project. The routes that will remain open will be open only to street legal vehicles. This closure will remain in effect until the fence surrounding the Management Area is completed and the habitat management plan for the desert tortoise in the western Mojave Desert identifies an appropriate level of vehicular access for this area and the area south of Edwards Air Force Base.

B. The area surrounding the Management Area will be routinely patrolled to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and County laws and regulations relative to unauthorized off-highway vehicle use and trespass and the take prohibitions contained

within Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act. Such patrols, which have already been instituted, have reduced the number of primary vehicles (i.e., motor homes with accompanying dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles) in the area north of the Management Area from an average of 400 to approximately ten, on a holiday weekend (Bureau memorandum to the Service dated June 21, 1990).

C. Tortoises found within the Management Area by Bureau personnel will be removed pending the availability of a method of disposal agreed upon by the Service, Bureau, and the California Department of Fish and Game (Department). Tortoises could be used to fulfill research needs or to provide captive breeding stock. The decision to remove tortoises was based on two factors: 1) the increasingly degraded condition of tortoise habitat within the Management Area would very likely not support a viable population of tortoises, and 2) the loss of individual tortoises which could otherwise be used in a beneficial manner for the species' recovery would be unacceptable due to both public perception and the real biological value of individual animals in a species with such a notably long life span and slow reproductive rate.

Based on the numbers of tortoises that are found in specific locations, construction of a tortoise-proof fence along some portions of the northern boundary of the Management Area may be appropriate. This need could arise if significant numbers of tortoises are found grouped in an area which has appropriate tortoise habitat on both sides of the Management Area's boundary. In this case, tortoises within the Management Area could possibly be moved onto Bureau land immediately outside the Management Area if their individual ranges appear to include that adjacent habitat. The decision to pursue this option would need to be based on an evaluation of the tortoise resources in specific areas and would be subject to the approval of both the Service and the Department.

D. The Bureau will physically close and rehabilitate appropriate portions of routes outside of the Management Area but within the Zone of Influence that are not designated open as part of the El Mirage Management Plan (Figure 1) or in other tortoise habitat areas deemed appropriate by the Bureau, Service, and the Department. Such routes can be considered formerly legally open roads and other roads and trails that have developed through unauthorized vehicle use. The closures will be funded by $60,000 allocated within the Management Area's work plan. The initial expenditures will be used to physically close roads in the area north of the Management Area. Subsequent rehabilitation efforts could be elsewhere within desert tortoise habitat in the western Mojave Desert and would be subject to prior coordination with the Service and the Department.

The goal of the rehabilitation would be to physically remove evidence of the road to reduce its visibility and eliminate subsequent use by motorists. This could be achieved by scarification and placement of native vegetation. The methods used would be

discussed with the Service and the Department prior to implementation and coordinated by a Bureau biologist.

Effects of the Proposed Project on the Listed Species

Species Account

On April 2, 1990, the Service determined the Mojave population of the desert tortoise to be threatened. The desert tortoise is a large, herbivorous reptile found in portions of the California, Arizona, Nevada, and Utah deserts. It also occurs in Sonora and Sinaloa, Mexico. Generally, tortoises are active during the spring and early summer when annual plants are most common. Additional activity occurs during warmer fall months and occasionally after summer rain storms. Tortoises spend the remainder of the year in burrows, escaping the extreme weather conditions of the desert.

Further information on the range, biology, and ecology of the desert tortoise can be found in Burge (1978), Burge and Bradley (1976), Hovik and Hardenbrook (1989), Luckenbach (1982), and Weinstein et al. (1987).

Plant communities within the Management Area include creosote bush scrub (~80%), Mojave saltbush-allscale scrub (~5%), and iodine bush-alkali scrub (~15%) (Munz 1974). Joshua trees (Yucca brevifolia) are scattered throughout the Management Area. These habitats are characterized by creosote (Larrea tridentata), burrobush (Ambrosia dumosa), Mojave saltbush (Atriplex spinifera), allscale (A. polycarpa), beavertail cactus (Opuntia basilaris), and buckwheat (Eriogonum fasciculatum).

Approximately 7,880 acres of the Management Area are occupied by El Mirage Dry Lake. Graded roads are estimated to cover an additional 158 acres, based on the presence of at least 65 miles of graded roads and an estimated average road width of 20 feet. Hundreds of miles of smaller roads and trails cross the Management Area. As a result of the lake bed and the existing roads, the Bureau estimates that approximately 16,360 acres of the 24,400-acre Area may contain habitat with varying degrees of suitability for use by tortoises.

As part of the California Desert Conservation Area planning efforts, one standard Bureau tortoise transect was conducted within and four in the vicinity of the Management Area in 1977 and 1978 (Figure 2). From this work, densities at that time were estimated to range from 0 to 250 individuals per square mile, with an estimated total for the Management Area of 2,939 tortoises.

Since the time of these transects, lands within the Management Area have been subjected to intense off-road vehicle use, grazing, recreational shooting, mineral exploration, development of private lands, and numerous other activities detrimental to tortoises. In particular, the impacts of extensive off-highway vehicle use are very

visible near the dry lake bed and around rock outcrops. During the on-site visit of May 16, in which approximately three hours were spent driving a loop through the Management Area, off-road vehicle use was evident over most of the route. These impacts include route proliferation, crushing of shrubs, and wind erosion resulting from disturbance of the site by vehicles.

As a result of these impacts (over the last ten to twelve years), the actual density of tortoises on these lands is estimated to be much less than that estimated in 1977-78. If the density of tortoises within the Management Area has declined at the approximately 70% rate that has occurred elsewhere in the western Mojave Desert (cited by the Bureau from Berry's 1990 draft report, *The status of desert tortoise populations in the Mojave and Colorado Deserts of California in 1989*) and the area occupied by the dry lake bed and graded roads is removed from consideration as tortoise habitat, the Bureau estimates, in materials submitted to the Service during the consultation process, that approximately 624 tortoises may currently remain within the Management Area. Given the degree of disturbance that was observed during site visits by Service personnel, the actual number of tortoises that may be present would seem to be even lower. This is particularly true in the area surrounding the lake bed and generally south of the Shadow Mountains. The Twin Hills vicinity has not been subjected to off-highway vehicle use as extensively as has the southern portion of the Management Area. Therefore, tortoise numbers near Twin Hills may not have suffered the same magnitude of decline that is likely to have occurred elsewhere in the Management Area.

The Bureau's assessment notes that approximately 22 tortoises have been collected by visitors (15) or found dead (7) over the last six years. Approximately six live tortoises have been observed annually. During the May 16 site visit, one dead adult tortoise and two live tortoises were observed in the northeastern portion of the Management Area, near Twin Peaks. The live tortoises were observed approximately 20 feet apart in an area that had evidence of a moderate amount of off-road vehicle use. No other signs of tortoise use were found during our site visit.

On a previous visit, a long-time resident of the El Mirage area indicated that, 15 years ago, tortoises were fairly common in the lowlands near the dry lake; he also indicated that he had not seen any tortoises for the last five to ten years (conversation with Bransfield). If these anecdotal numbers and statements approximate the existing tortoise resource within the southern portion of the Management Area, it is highly unlikely that a viable population remains or would exist in the near future under present or the proposed management.

Analysis of Impacts

The construction of the boundary fence, vault toilets, entry stations, and a maintenance/headquarters building and the paving of the access road would result in

the permanent removal of an unquantified area of tortoise habitat. With the possible exception of the boundary fence, these facilities could be located in previously disturbed areas with low tortoise habitat values and not result in the take of individual tortoises. Much of the boundary fence construction could also be accomplished without loss of individual tortoises or tortoise habitat through careful construction of the fence and minor adjustments to its alignment to avoid individual animals and burrows.

Successful implementation of the management plan would concentrate additional recreational uses and undoubtedly result in increased impacts to the tortoise and its habitat within the 24,400 acre Management Area. These impacts include both direct and indirect adverse effects to the tortoise and its habitat. Crushing of animals and collapsing of occupied burrows and burial of the occupants are direct impacts which would result in the loss of individual animals. Increased visitor use will likely result in more human/tortoise interactions and greater numbers of tortoises being collected or physically harmed. Indirect impacts may have more subtle effects which would affect the habitat quality and population over a longer period of time. For example, reduction of shrub cover could lead to increased predation and fewer cover sites to avoid the heat. Additional trash accumulation could result in increased numbers of common ravens (Corvus corax), which are known to prey on tortoises. The destruction of the soil's natural crust will reduce the ability of the habitat to support the native annual plants on which the tortoise feeds.

Essentially, maintenance of the status quo or increased use will very likely ultimately lead to complete elimination of all tortoises. Although the existing information indicates that tortoise densities are generally very low, no quantified data exist which indicate whether tortoise densities vary from one portion of the Management Area to another. For example, an on-site visit by a Service biologist seemed to confirm that tortoise densities in the vicinities of the dry lake and much of the land south of the Shadow Mountains are currently extremely low and that increased recreational use in these areas would be unlikely to adversely affect tortoises and tortoise habitat.

Small patches of denser creosote scrub habitat in the northern area, portions of the Twin Hills area, and the slopes between the Hills and the Shadow Mountains seem to receive less recreational use. The quality of the habitat in these areas still appears suitable for tortoises, although most of the tortoises may have been removed by collecting or poaching. Therefore, intensive use of these relatively undisturbed areas would constitute an unquantified loss of tortoise habitat and also some tortoises that has not been precisely quantified.

This adverse impact could potentially be at least partially offset if implementation results in decreased impacts to viable tortoise habitat within the approximately 75,600 acres within the Zone of Influence that are currently being affected outside of the Management Area. However, significant portions of this acreage are privately owned or on small parcels of Bureau land which would be difficult to manage for the benefit

of the tortoise. The best opportunities for positive effects lie to the north where the implementation of road closures on Bureau lands outside of the Management Area and increased Ranger presence could result in restoration of habitat values. These benefits would be increased if the Bureau could further consolidate its holdings in that region. In any case, quantification of the beneficial impacts on tortoises and tortoise habitat, beyond noting the number of sections affected by road closures would be extremely difficult.

The additional mitigation measures which are intended to be implemented by the Bureau as part of the proposed action were summarized earlier in this Biological Opinion.

The Service believes the impacts described above will not jeopardize the continued existence of the Mojave Desert population of the desert tortoise. We present this conclusion for the following reasons:

1. Large portions of the public and private lands which have been identified for inclusion within this Management Area have already been seriously compromised by the impacts noted above. It is likely that viable populations are no longer present over the majority of the Management Area.

2. Restriction of the ongoing adverse impacts to within the Management Area could relieve stress on tortoises living within portions of the 75,600 acres outside of the proposed Area that are currently receiving unauthorized and uncontrolled uses.

3. It may be possible to use the tortoises inhabiting the lands within the Management Area (after implementation of the Management Plan) in a manner that would provide a long-term benefit towards the conservation of the species. These uses could include research and educational purposes.

Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects are those impacts of future State and private actions that are reasonably certain to occur in the project area. Future Federal actions will be subject to the consultation requirements established in Section 7 of the Act and, therefore, are not considered cumulative to the proposed project.

Many of the actions that are reasonably expected to occur within the vicinity of the project will be subject to Section 7 consultations, because the Federal government owns large portions of the desert. However, actions on private lands, such as urbanization, recreation, and grazing, will continue to contribute to habitat degradation and loss, especially in the Antelope Valley area and the southern portion of the Mojave Desert extending from the Valley to the area north of Joshua Tree National Monument. The Service has contacted the Counties of San Bernardino, Kern, Riverside, and Los

Angeles (and the incorporated areas within the desert) regarding the listing of the tortoise and its implications for County-permitted activities. Several cities in San Bernardino and Kern Counties have expressed interest in attempting to obtain a Section 10(a) permit from the Service.

Although the Bureau's Land Tenure Adjustment Project is a Federal action which is subject to Section 7 regulations, it is important to note here that the results of that action will have major impacts on the ability of the Bureau's El Mirage Cooperative Management program and any stipulations contained within this Biological Opinion to provide significant benefits to the tortoise. The basic premise of this Opinion is that the Federal land north of the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area can be effectively and efficiently managed for tortoises as a result of the concentration of recreational activities within the Management Area and the reduction in human use within tortoise habitat outside (specifically to the north) of the Management Area.

One of the Reasonable and Prudent Measures within this Opinion is the reduction of take of tortoises and habitat in the region north of the Management Area through the closure of roads. That management goal will only be maximally successful if the private lands north of the road closure area are consolidated with existing Bureau lands into Federal ownership through the Land Tenure Adjustment Project and management actions implemented which will result in improved habitat quality for the tortoise. To that end, the Service is recommending, through the Conservation Recommendations contained in this Opinion, that the Bureau further consolidate its holdings north of the El Mirage area and undertake further road closure actions in this locale through the Desert Plan amendment process. Decisions made through the Western Mojave Habitat Management Plan and in the management of tortoise habitat within Edwards Air Force Base may also significantly affect the management of tortoise habitat in this area. It is, in fact, recognized that successful implementation of Bureau efforts to consolidate ownership and manage more contiguous blocks of desert habitat for the tortoise will be a positive action that will work to offset impacts from the proposed El Mirage project.

Incidental Take

Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act prohibits the take of listed species without special exemption. Taking is defined as harassing, harming, pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, capturing, collecting, or attempting to engage in any such conduct. Under the terms of Section 7(b)(4) and 7(o)(2) of the Act, taking that is incidental to and not intended as part of the agency action is not considered to be prohibited taking under the Act provided that such taking is in compliance with this Incidental Take statement. The measures described below are nondiscretionary, and must be undertaken by the agency or made a binding condition of any grant or permit, as appropriate.

Based on the information appended to your request for consultation and the analysis of impacts provided above, the Service anticipates that the following take would occur as a result of the implementation of the proposed management plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area:

1. Five (5) tortoises per year for the first five years as a result of incidental injury or mortality associated with authorized recreational activities.

2. One (1) tortoise per year thereafter as a result of incidental injury or mortality associated with authorized recreational activities.

3. Twenty (20) tortoises per year for years one through five as a result of Bureau activities designed to collect tortoises or transfer tortoises outside of the Management Area found near the northern boundary fence.

4. Two (2) tortoises per year thereafter as a result of Bureau activities designed to collect tortoises or transfer tortoises outside of the Management Area found near the northern boundary fence.

5. Approximately 16,360 acres of tortoise habitat (already in various stages of deteriorating condition) as a result of authorized off-highway vehicle use within the boundary of the Management Area.

The Service is assuming that the stipulations contained in this Opinion, as Reasonable and Prudent Measures and Terms and Conditions to reduce take, will minimize take associated with the proposed action to that described above. This Opinion does not authorize any form of take other than the accidental death or injury of individual tortoises through off-highway vehicle use, authorized transferral or removal of tortoises by Bureau employees, and the take of tortoise habitat within the boundary of the Management Area. This includes but is not limited to the collection of tortoises for pets and shooting at tortoises. Any person found engaging in such activities will be liable for prosecution.

Reasonable and Prudent Measures

The Service believes that the following Reasonable and Prudent Measures are necessary and appropriate to minimize the incidental taking authorized by this Biological Opinion:

1. Take of individual tortoises within the Management Area, in the form of injury or mortality, shall be minimized through education programs for Area users, regular ranger patrols, selective tortoise-proof fencing, site specific surveys and planning during the construction of facilities, and other management programs instituted by the Bureau as components of the action.

2. The take of tortoise habitat within the fenced Area shall be limited to authorized recreation uses and the construction of the management facilities noted in the Bureau's request for consultation.

3. The take of individual tortoises and tortoise habitat outside of the fenced Management Area shall be reduced through the closure of roads on Bureau land outside of the fenced area.

Terms and Conditions

To comply with the Reasonable and Prudent Measures contained in this Biological Opinion, the Bureau must abide by the Terms and Conditions presented in this Opinion. These Terms and Conditions are as follows:

1A. The take of individual tortoises, by persons other than Bureau employees or its agents previously approved by the Service, shall be limited to accidental and incidental mortality or injury of animals caused by authorized recreational activities within the boundary of the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. Any other form of take is strictly prohibited by Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act.

1B. All areas designated for construction within tortoise habitat shall be surveyed for tortoises by a qualified biologist prior to the initiation of these activities.

1C. Tortoises found during surveys of sites for areas to be used for construction of toilet vaults, access roads, maintenance buildings, and entrance facilities shall be collected by the Bureau. Tortoises which are found during fence construction shall be avoided or placed outside tortoise-proof fences on the northern portion of the Management Area and shall be collected by Bureau employees in heavily disturbed areas in the southern portion of the Management Area. These areas are noted in Figure 2.

1D. Tortoise numbers and habitat quality in the northern portions of the Management Area which abut Bureau land outside of the Management Area shall be assessed by Bureau biologists prior to the construction of the Management Area's fence (Figure 3). Should viable tortoise populations occur in the areas on either side of the fence, the Bureau shall informally consult with the Service and the Department to arrive at a decision on whether to install tortoise-proof fencing and move tortoises outside of the Management Area in this vicinity.

1E. Tortoises that are found within the Management Area and are to be removed shall be transferred to the pre-approved location or handler within three hours of their capture. During all times when tortoises are in transit or being held in temporary facilities, captured tortoises shall be handled in a manner that would not result in injury or excess stress to the animal. For example, they should be transported in a

manner that will reduce jarring, such as in a padded box in the cab of the vehicle. Tortoises shall also be maintained at temperatures which will not result in the animals being stressed by heat.

1F. Tortoises shall not be removed from the Management Area until pre-approved locations are available for the immediate disposal of such animals. These locations would include facilities or persons with the appropriate State and Federal permits who are conducting authorized activities with tortoises. The Bureau, in conjunction with the Service and the Department, shall establish a means of properly disposing of tortoises not needed for research efforts within six months of the issuance of this Opinion.

1G. The Bureau shall supply the Service and the Department with an annual report which provides, at a minimum, the number of tortoises found within the Management Area in the previous year and the following information on each tortoise:

a. Condition (alive, dead, injured, with respiratory disease symptoms, etc.)
b. Size and sex
c. Location (to nearest quarter section)
d. Date of capture or observation
e. Condition of the habitat in which the tortoise was found
f. Person who captured the tortoise
g. Temporary and final dispositions of the animal

1H. Any persons aside from Bureau employees who will need to handle tortoises shall be approved by the Service and Department prior to conducting any activities that will require the handling of animals and shall handle these animals under the auspices of the Bureau. The request for such approvals should be made in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the desired onset of handling activities.

1I. All handling shall be in accordance with protocols developed by Dr. Cecil Schwalbe from the University of Arizona for the prevention of the spread of Upper Respiratory Disease Syndrome.

1J. The Bureau shall develop educational materials for the public which will provide information on the desert tortoise and the management activities and goals for the species within the Management Area and on surrounding lands. The penalties for the take of a listed species shall be defined, as well as the actions which should be taken if a tortoise is encountered. This information shall be displayed, at a minimum, on kiosks constructed at the site. The contents of these materials shall be reviewed with the Service and the Department at least thirty (30) working days prior to their public display.

1K. Lands within the Management Area shall be routinely patrolled to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and County laws and regulatlons relative to unauthorized uses and to ensure compliance with Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act.

2. The take of tortoise habitat within the fenced Area shall be limited to authorized recreation uses and the construction of the management facllities noted in the Bureau's request for consultation. The Service and the Department shall be contacted should any other activity be planned within the Management Area to determlne whether the proposed activity is covered by this Biological Opinion.

3A. The Bureau shall issue an order to close the routes (any path, trall, or formerly legally open road used by motorized vehicles) in the Zone of Influence with the exception of those routes indicated in Figure 1, prior to the signing of the Management Plan. This closure shall include twelve full and two partial sections north of the Management Area which are immediately south of a consolidation zone, as proposed by the Bureau's Western Mojave Land Tenure Adjustment project. These routes shall be open only to street legal vehicles.

3B. Lands surrounding the Management Area shall be routinely patrolled to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and County laws and regulations relative to unauthorized off-highway vehlcle use and trespass and prohlbltlons against take contained in Section 9 of the Endangered species Act.

3C. The Bureau shall physically close and rehabilitate approprlate portions of routes (such that visibility of and access to the closed routes are eliminated) outslde of the Management Area that are not designated open as part of the El Mirage Management Plan. The closures shall be funded by a maximum of $10,000 allocated to be used within the area that will be retained in Federal ownership per management actlons contained in the El Mirage Cooperative Management Plan (Figure 1). An additional $50,000 shall be made available for road rehabilitation in the three years following the completion of the Management Area's boundary fence. The closures funded by the subsequent funding could be elsewhere wlthin desert tortoise habitat in the western Mojave Desert and shall be subject to prior coordinatlon with the Service and the Department.

3D. Physical closures shall be in the form of scarifIcatlon of existing road surfaces and planting of native vegetation to ellminate the visibility of the closed route. Specific techniques shall be developed by the appropriate Bureau personnel, in coordination with Bureau biologists and botanists and staff from the Service and the Department.

3E. The Bureau shall develop a monitoring plan to assess the success of this road rehabilitation program and recommend alternative actions, should they be deemed by

the Service as necessary. A major goal of the plan should be to evaluate whether the actions taken have resulted in the elimination of travel on the closed routes.

The Service is to be notified within three working days should any threatened species be found dead or injured during this project. Notification must include the date, time, and location of the carcass, and any other pertinent information. Dead animals may be marked in an appropriate manner and left on-site. Injured animals should be transported to a qualified veterinarian. Should any treated tortoises survive, the Service shall be contacted regarding the final disposition of the animals. The Service contact person is Ray Bransfield.

If the Incidental Take authorized by this Opinion is met, the Bureau shall immediately cease the activity resulting in the take and reinitiate formal consultation with the Service to avoid violation of Section 9.

Conservation Recommendations

With the large number of informal and formal consultations regarding tortoises that the Bureau and the service are engaged in, it is somewhat impractical to view each one independently of the others. Some actions will definitely benefit the tortoise when all is accounted, while other actions will have adverse impacts. The Service recognizes this fact. The broad view, or the cumulative effect, of the Bureau's actions in the Mojave Desert plays a significant role in our evaluation of individual Bureau actions. It is, therefore, important for the Bureau to continue to pursue comprehensive efforts to manage its lands in the Mojave Desert for the benefit of the tortoise.

In furtherance of the purposes of the Endangered Species Act (Sections 2(c) and 7(a)(1)) that mandate Federal agencies to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of listed species, we recommend implementing the following action:

1. The Bureau should pursue a Desert Plan amendment which will enable it to consolidate its holdings in the area between the northern edge of the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area and the southern edge of the current Land Tenure Adjustment consolidation zone (Figure 3). Acquisition of up to six full or partial sections in this area will facilitate greater control of vehicle access and result in better management opportunities for tortoises in this area and an addition to tortoise habitat to the north which will be consolidated under the Land Tenure Adjustment program.

2. Upon acquisition of these lands, the Bureau should implement a route closure and rehabilitation process to recover tortoise habitat values. Routes to be closed include should include all trails, paths, and roads that are not necessary to provide access to the routes designated open through the El Mirage Management Plan or a subsequent habitat management plan for the tortoise in this vicinity.

3. Consideration should be given to developing a small poster or leaflet on the tortoise and the Bureau's tortoise management program for the general El Mirage vicinity which could be distributed to local businesses.

This concludes formal consultation on the Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. If the action is significantly modified in a manner not discussed above, if new information becomes available on listed species or impacts to listed species, or if the incidental take limit is met, reinitiation of formal consultation with the Service should be considered. We would appreciate notification of your final decision on this matter. Any questions or comments should be directed to Ray Bransfield at the Ventura Office at FTS 983-6040 or (805) 644-1766.

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Burge, B.L. 1978. Physical characteristics and patterns of utilization of cover sites by Gopherus agassizii in southern Nevada. Proc. 1978 Symp., The Desert Tortoise Council. pp. 80-111.

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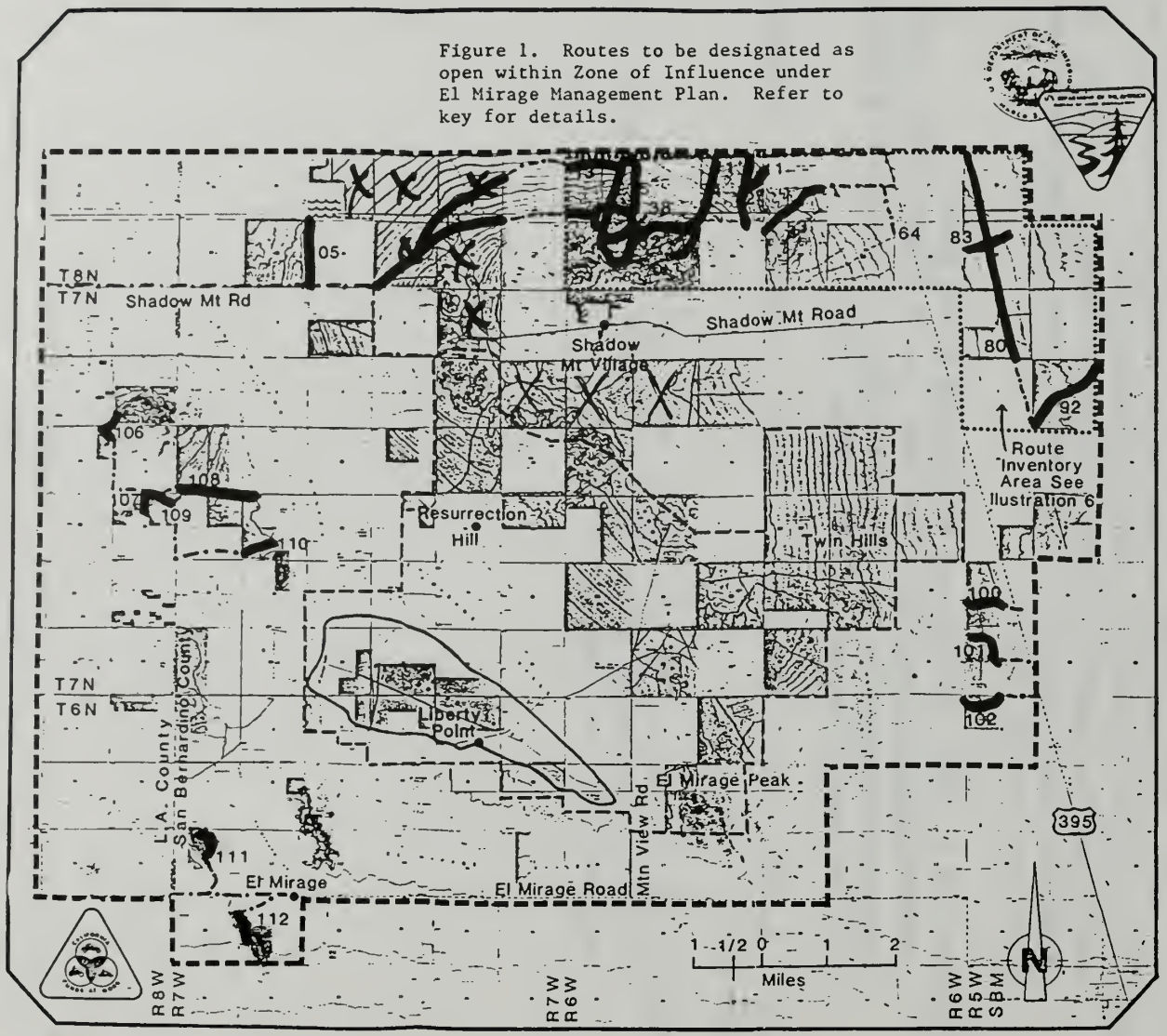
Weinstein, M., K.H. Berry, and F.B. Turner. 1987. An analysis of habitat relationships of the desert tortoise in California. A report to Southern California Edison Co.

ILLUSTRATION 5

Figure 1. Routes to be designated as open within Zone of Influence under El Mirage Management Plan. Refer to key for details.



EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

OPEN ROUTES

- Open Routes
- Key Routes on Private Land

BOUNDARIES

- Management Area Boundary
- Zone of Influence Boundary
- Private Land
- Public Land
- State Land

DRAFT

Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District
Barstow Resource Area

Figure 2. Estimated desert tortoise densities and locations of standard transects (●) performed in 1977 and 1978

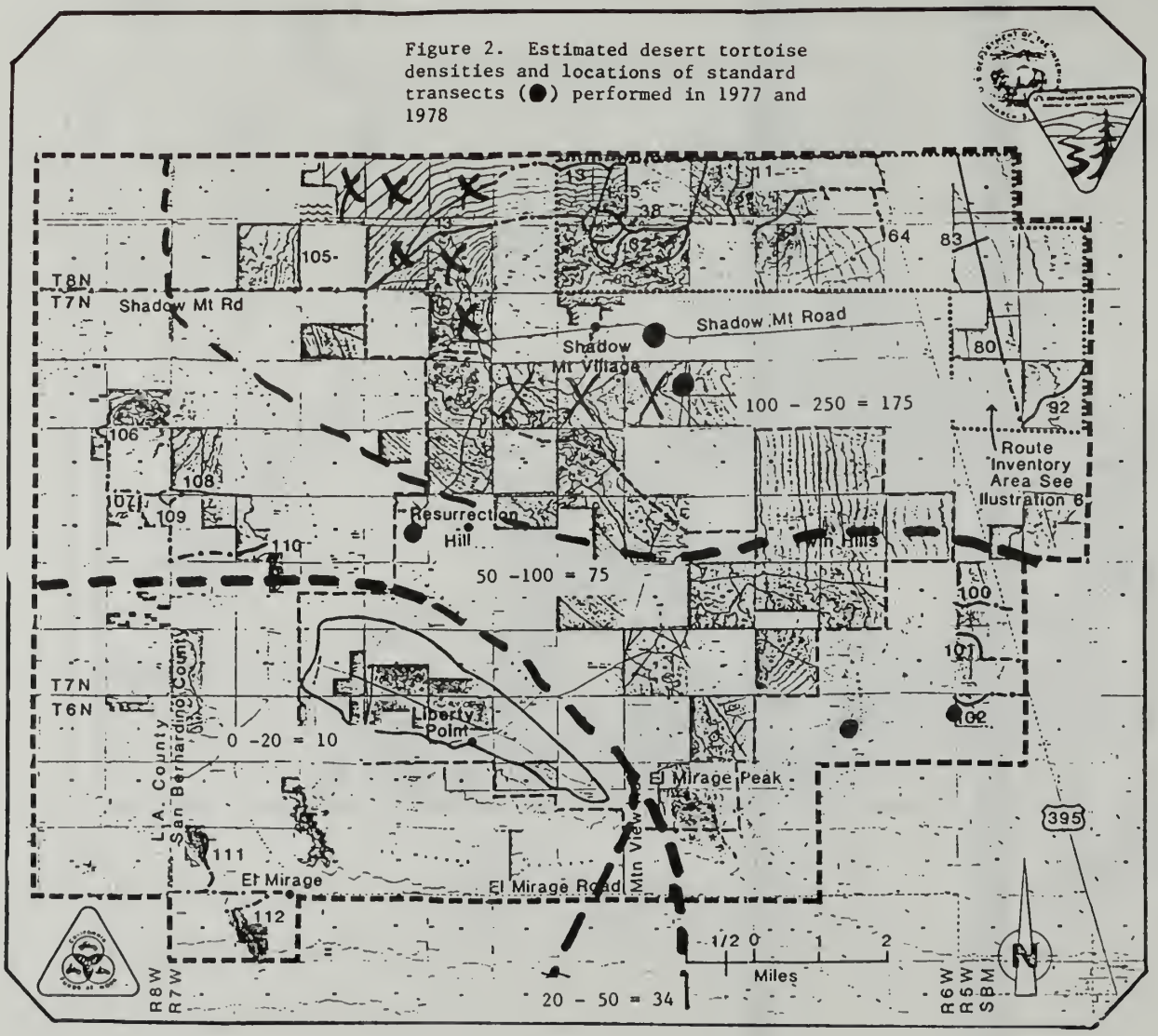


ILLUSTRATION 5

EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

OPEN ROUTES

3 Open Routes

Key Routes on Private Land

BOUNDARIES

Management Area Boundary

Zone of Influence Boundary

Private Land

Public Land

State Land

DRAFT

Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District
Barstow Resource Area

Figure 3. Recommended sections for future consolidation into public ownership (O). Planned retention areas (X).

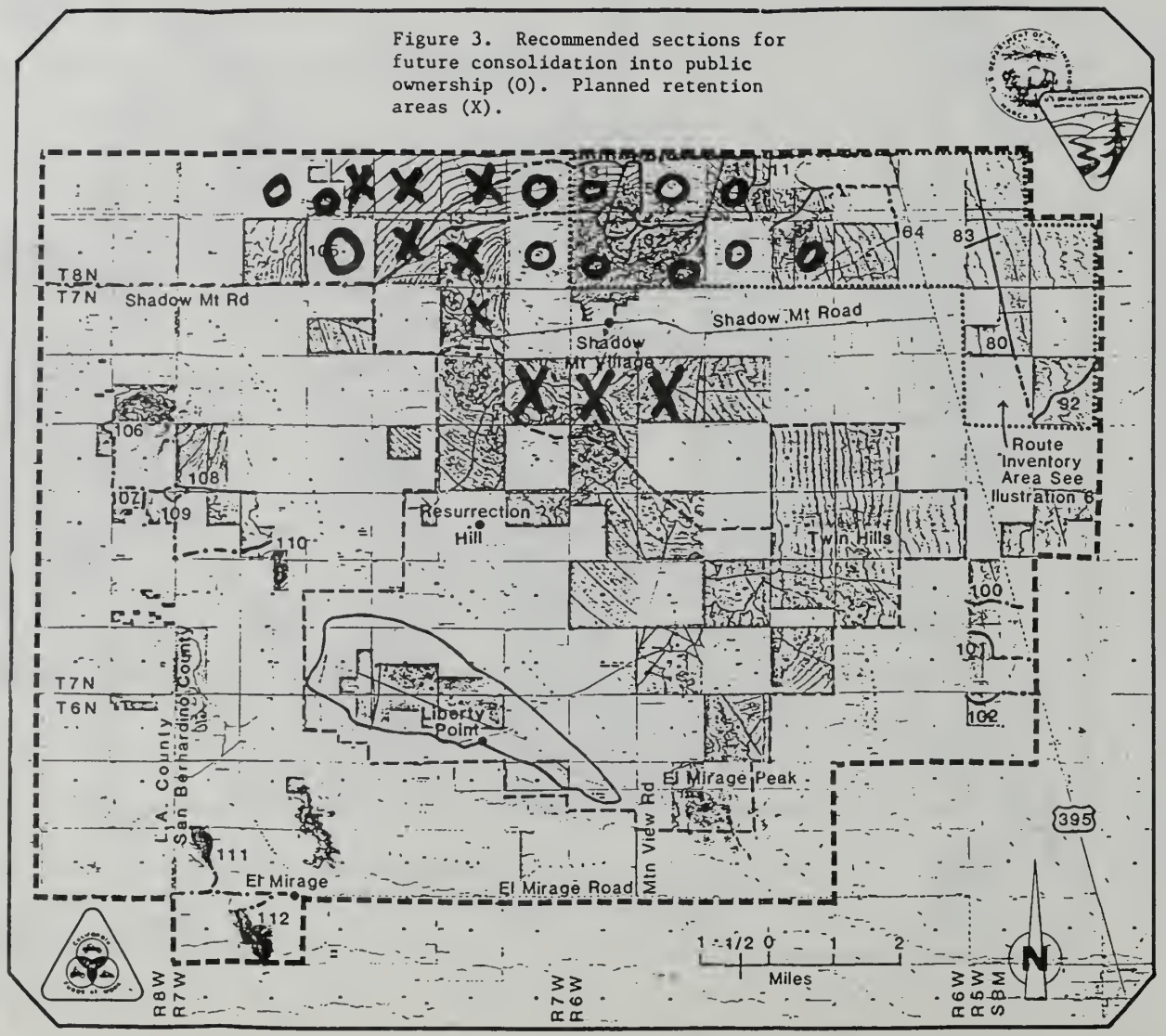


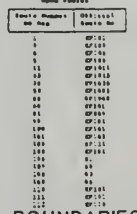
ILLUSTRATION 5

EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

OPEN ROUTES

3 Open Routes

Key Routes on Private Land



BOUNDARIES

Management Area Boundary

Zone of Influence Boundary

Private Land

Public Land

State Land

DRAFT

Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District
Barstow Resource Area

APPENDIX F

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

8340 (El Mirage)
1791 (CA 068.52)
CA-068-0-7

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE EL MIRAGE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

MANAGEMENT PLAN
San Bernardino County
California

CA-068-0-7

Cooperating Parties:

U.S. Department of Interior,
Bureau of Land Management

California Department of Parks and Recreation,
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division

California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission

San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department

Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation

Prepared by:

Brad Martin
Outdoor Recreation Planner
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District
Barstow Resource Area

01-19-90
Date

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Setting

The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area is located at the western edge of the Barstow Resource Area, approximately 20 miles northwest of Victorville. Upon full development the Management Area (Illustration 2 in the Management Plan) will encompass a total of approximately 24,400 acres of public land and will accommodate a variety of recreational and commercial uses. For planning purposes the affected environment is identified as the Management Area plus the surrounding area from one to five miles wide. This surrounding area is referred to as the zone of influence and will be indirectly impacted from the management actions within the Management Plan.

This environmental assessment (EA) is combined with the Management Plan. The Management Plan identifies the affected environment and specifies the philosophy and specific management actions for developing the Management Area. The EA analyzes the impacts of the Management Plan (proposed action) and alternatives, assesses the cumulative impacts, and identifies the irretrievable commitment of resources. The EA does not list specific mitigation items for the proposed action because the Management Plan contains the actions that appropriately mitigate the impacts to the affected environment.

B. Need for the Proposed Action

For over 35 years, public and private lands within the Management Area, and the zone of influence, have been used for off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation. The public and private lands are intermixed and recreational visitors unintentionally trespass on the private land. The local communities have demanded action be taken to reduce recreation related impacts (trespass, trash, vandalism) on private land. In addition, the *1980 California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan* identified the public land in the area as available for disposal. Combined, these actions would virtually eliminate recreation opportunities in the area.

To protect the public's recreation opportunities, the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area was established in 1988. It was established through an Interagency Agreement among the Counties of San Bernardino and Los Angeles, the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation, the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission, and the BLM. Each party will play a specific role in bringing the Management Area to fruition. As the lead agency BLM has prepared the long-term comprehensive Management Plan which will guide the development and management of the area.

C. Conformance With Land Use Plans

The *CDCA Plan* recognized the historic use, and the recreation opportunities that exist at El Mirage. At the time the *CDCA Plan* was prepared, the land on and around the lakebed was a mixture of public and private. Public land on the lakebed (1,250 acres) was designated multiple use class (MUC) "intensive" ("I"), with a vehicle access designation of "open". Public land around the lakebed was left unclassified and identified for disposal. The mixed land ownership pattern created a situation where there was no apparent solution to assure the long-term viability of the public's recreation opportunities.

The *CDCA Plan* called for the BLM to continue to work with the California Department of Parks and Recreation to provide for a variety of motorized-vehicle use opportunities through the State Off-Highway Vehicle Grant Fund. The State of California, as a signatour to the Interagency Agreement, is providing the majority of the funding for the Cooperative Management Area. The funding will be used for land acquisition, facilities, staff, materials, and equipment. The acquisition of approximately 12,000 acres of private land will resolve the land ownership conflict associated with the current uses.

The *CDCA Plan* will be amended as a result of the Management Plan. The amendments will change the multiple use class and vehicle access designations which will allow for the retention of existing public land and acquisition of private land for intensive OHV recreation. It will also allow for the closure of certain public land within the zone of influence to reduce OHV related trespass. The plan amendments and management actions contained within the Management Plan (proposed action) are consistent with the San Bernardino County General Plan.

D. Public Scoping

In the fall of 1984, a Workgroup was formed to seek a long-term solution for the issues concerning El Mirage dry lakebed and the Shadow Mountains. The Workgroup was composed of residents from the nearby communities and representatives of the various recreational and commercial interests using the area. The Workgroup met on a regular basis throughout the second half of 1984 and for the first half of 1985. The focus of these initial meetings was to identify, analyze, and propose solutions for the issues concerning land use.

The Workgroup completed an exhaustive study of possible means to resolve the issues, and in 1985 published the *El Mirage/Shadow Mountains Feasibility Report*. The report made recommendations concerning a manager of the project, funding sources, development of a management plan, acquisition, facilities and services,

management and operations, and personnel. These recommendations have been incorporated in the Management Plan.

Following the feasibility report, the Workgroup remained active to provide input and to assist with preparation of the Management Plan. During preparation of the Management Plan, two public meetings were held to obtain public comment concerning the issues. Additional public meetings will be held for public comment on the draft plan. The Workgroup will continue to be active throughout development of the final plan.

II. PROPOSED ACTION and ALTERNATIVES

A. Alternative A, Proposed Action

The Bureau of Land Management's proposed action is the implementation of the *El Mirage Management Plan*. The proposed action is a refinement of the recommendations contained in the 1986 publication, *A Proposal to Establish the El Mirage Special Recreation Area*. The specific management actions to be implemented under the proposed action are detailed in Part III of the Management Plan. The implementation schedule and cost projections for the Management Plan are shown in Part IV.

In summary, the proposed action is the development of the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. This would be accomplished by designating approximately 24,400 acres as an off-highway vehicle recreation area, with MUC "I" and vehicle access designation "open". This would include approximately 12,400 acres of existing public land, and approximately 12,000 acres of private lands identified for acquisition (Illustration 5 in the Management Plan). Proposed facilities that would be developed include five restrooms, an internally maintained road network (18 miles), an entrance station, a headquarters complex, and a perimeter fence.

Visitor services and resource protection would be accomplished with a total of six rangers (3 law enforcement, 3 EMT). Entrance fees would be collected at the primary entrance, and on holiday weekends at two secondary entrances. Visitor services would include first aid, law enforcement, signing, and visitor education. Resource protection would include: actions to mitigate impacts to the desert tortoise and Mohave ground squirrel, lakebed use restrictions (for dust control and surface protection), actions to manage vegetation (i.e., replace Joshua trees), the installation of vehicle barriers, and the protection of cultural sites.

Part III of the Management Plan contains actions to both manage the recreation use and to mitigate associated impacts to an acceptable level. The Management Plan also includes a series of

actions designed to monitor the impacts to the natural environment to ensure they are within acceptable limits. For these reasons, the EA does not contain a specific list of mitigating measures.

B. Alternative B, No Action

The no action alternative would result in the management of El Mirage dry lake according to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan. In this scenario the lakebed (multiple use class "intensive"; vehicle access designation "open") would be managed for intensive OHV recreation, while the surrounding public land ("unclassified") would continue to be available for disposal. All existing uses would be allowed and restricted to the lakebed. There are no provisions in the *CDCA Plan* to acquire private lands, to hire personnel, or to develop facilities for the area.

The *CDCA Plan* recognized the existing uses, but did not present solutions to the issues associated with these uses. Under the no action alternative, BLM would have to resolve the access issue (to the lakebed), and other issues associated with managing use and providing visitor services. Experience has proven that in the current situation, the BLM does not have sufficient resources or the jurisdiction to manage all the existing uses at El Mirage and in the Shadow Mountains. The San Bernardino County Sheriff has also gone on record as stating that the county does not have the resources to control the trespass, illegal shooting, littering, and other problems associated with recreational use of the area.

In the long-term, the reasonable foreseeable scenario for the no action alternative would be an organized effort on the part of the nearby communities to shut the area down to OHV use. Trespass and the associated problems are such that the surrounding communities have demanded a change to the existing situation. The vehicle access designation would most likely be closed on all the public land around the lakebed to reduce OHV related problems. The lakebed itself is not large enough to provide opportunities for OHV play and would also have to be closed to such use.

Over 85% of the existing recreation use is associated with OHVs. If the area were closed to OHV use, it would no longer qualify for funding through the Green Sticker Program. The BLM would not be able to resolve the issues concerning recreation use of the area without these funds. The continued availability of the lakebed for non-motorized use would most likely be in jeopardy. If this were the case, the public land on the lakebed would also be disposed.

C. Other Alternatives

Five other alternatives, relative to size and shape, were considered in the development of the boundary for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. These alternatives were considered

but dropped from further analysis for a variety of reasons. The following is a description of the five alternatives and the reasoning for dropping them from further analysis.

Alternative C
This alternative incorporated existing public land on the lakebed and land to the north and south just past the edge of the lakebed (total area of approximately 3,700 acres).

1. This small of an area would not have been able to accommodate the existing uses, and therefore, there was little public support.

2. There was no provision for public access.

Alternative D
This alternative included all the lakebed and the Shadow Mountains directly to the east (total area of approximately 8,100 acres).

1. This alternative was considered too small to accommodate the existing uses. Opportunities for mining and grazing would not exist, and OHVs would have been extremely limited and confined.

2. This alternative was also considered to provide an inadequate variety of terrain for OHVs.

3. This alternative contained a low percentage of public land in relation to private property.

Alternative E
This alternative included the lakebed, the Shadow Mountains east of the lakebed, and the public land further to the east (total area of approximately 12,000 acres).

1. While this area was considerably larger than the previous alternatives, the amount of land available for intensive OHV use was considered small.

2. The variety of terrain was limited.

3. There most likely would have been severe environmental impacts from heavy use in such a confined area.

4. Several existing uses would not have been included in this geographical configuration. This included mining and grazing.

Alternative F
This alternative included the lakebed, the Shadow Mountains to the east, public land over to Highway 395, and some of the Shadow Mountains to the north of the lakebed (total area of approximately 20,400 acres).

1. This alternative did not include adjacent public lands that were compatible with existing uses.

2. This alternative involved lands with a high ratio of private compared to public.

3. There were high development costs associated with the large amount of private land to be acquired.

Alternative G
This alternative included the lakebed, the Shadow Mountains east and north of the lakebed, public land over to Highway 395, and Nash Hill (total area of approximately 26,800 acres).

1. The ratio of private to public land was very high.

2. The development costs were also very high. Most of the high costs were associated with the large amount of private land to be acquired.

3. The size of the area would have made fencing a difficult task.

4. There were a high number of occupied structures within this boundary configuration.

In summary, these five alternatives were not considered any further because they did not pose realistic solutions to resolve conflicts to the satisfaction of both recreationists and the local communities.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The affected environment for the Management Area and the zone of influence is detailed in the Resource Data (Appendix A) of the Management Plan.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The following terms[1] are defined for the purpose of discussion within the Environmental Consequences section of this EA:

Negligible impact - the degree of anticipated environmental impact is considered less than minor.

Minor impact - comparatively unimportant; in terms of the area's vegetation or wildlife resources, a minor impact is one affecting a specific group of individuals of a population in a localized area for one generation or less; the integrity of the regional population is not likely to be affected.

Moderate impact - an effect sufficient enough to cause a change in the abundance, distribution, or quality of a resource. In terms of the area's vegetation and wildlife, the abundance or distribution of a portion of the regional or local population would change over more than one generation but would not affect the integrity of the regional population as a whole.

Major impact - an effect sufficient enough to cause a major change in the abundance, distribution, or quality of a resource. In terms of the area's vegetation and wildlife, the abundance or distribution of the regional or local population of a species would decline beyond which natural recruitment would not likely return that population to its former level within several generations.

Implementation of the El Mirage Management Plan will have a direct impact within the Management Area, and an indirect impact within the zone of influence.

A. Proposed Action Alternative

1. Natural Resource Values

Climate and Topography

There will be no impacts to the climate or the topography in the affected environment.

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[1]Environmental Assessment for the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan.

Vegetation

Overall, implementation of the proposed action will have a moderate negative impact on the plants in the affected environment. There are no known threatened or endangered plant species within the Management Area.

In the zone of influence the restriction of vehicle use to specific routes of travel (Illustration 3 in the Management Plan) will have a moderate positive impact on the vegetation. The potential for plants in these areas to be damaged by a vehicle will be reduced.

Vehicle use will not be limited to existing routes of travel within the Management Area. Opportunities for OHV play will be unrestricted. This will have a moderate negative impact on the vegetation. Route proliferation will continue with the inadvertent loss of some plants. Studies of similar OHV recreation areas in the Mojave Desert[1] estimate that approximately 4% of the total vegetative cover will be destroyed. However, due to the close proximity of large population centers, easy access, and the popularity of the Management Area, it is anticipated that the impact will be more severe. Possibly as much as 10% of the total vegetative cover could be destroyed.

Based on field observations of existing use patterns, recreation use will primarily impact small shrubs and annual grasses. Joshua trees and creosote bushes will be only slightly impacted. Route proliferation will be most intense along the primary access roads and near the popular camping and parking areas.

Camping and parking for day use will destroy all types of vegetation. Visitors typically spend a large part of their time riding OHVs around their camp. This leads to the development of a small clearing (50'-60') around the camp. Several of these clearings already exist and occupy a total of approximately 80 acres. Continued use would prevent plants from re-invading these areas. Camping and parking clearings will develop in new areas as a result of improved access, and will lead to an additional 20 acres of vegetation being cleared.

The planting of vegetation in small protected islands in popular camping and staging areas will provide scenic relief, stabilize the soil, and reduce rainfall run-off.

Authorized activities will have a negligible impact on the vegetation. Land Use Permits and authorizations for military or

---

[1]Stow, D. 1988. Interpretation of Aerial Photographs to Measure Off-Road Vehicle Disturbances in the California Desert District. BLM Contract No. CA 950-CT8-23. CDD, Riverside, CA.

educational uses will only be given if the activities do not propose negative impacts. Special Recreation Use Permits may be issued for OHV events that have the potential for disturbing or destroying small amounts of vegetation. Mining is allowed and presents the potential for impacting the vegetation through digging and scrapping activities. Grazing is also allowed and may result in the temporary reduction of native plants, predominately annuals.

Development of the facilities will result in the loss of a few individual plants. Buildings will be constructed on existing clearings wherever possible, and only existing routes of travel will be improved or maintained. Drilling the fence post holes for the perimeter barrier will result in the loss of some plants.

Some vegetation will be intentionally removed from the lakebed. These will be plants that have invaded areas of the lakebed disturbed by vehicle use, and in pockets protected from the wind by a man-made windbreak. This action will have a negligible effect on the vegetation in the Management Area.

Wildlife

Implementation of the proposed action will have an overall minor negative impact on wildlife. The Management Area encompasses the home range of two species of special concern. First is the desert tortoise, which is emergency listed as an endangered species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and is listed as threatened by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). Second is the Mohave ground squirrel, a State listed threatened species.

The actions in the Management Plan relative to the tortoise and the Mohave ground squirrel reflect a dialogue between the BLM, CDFG, and the USFWS for these species. BLM has conferred with CDFG regarding the squirrel and the tortoise, and initiated formal Section 7 Consultation with the USFWS relative to the desert tortoise. A no-jeopardy opinion is expected. (Note: on June 25, 1990 a no-jeopardy opinion was issued by the USFWS.)

Under the proposed action, there would be a negligible impact to any potential population of the squirrel within the Management Area. The presence or absence of Mohave ground squirrels within the Management Area has not been documented. Inventories will be conducted, populations monitored, and protection measures taken if appropriate.

Historically the desert tortoise occurred throughout the Management Area. However, management for viable populations of desert tortoise and the management for recreation (including OHV play) are not compatible within the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area. Maintenance of desert tortoises within the Management Area is not feasible. To this extent, actions number fourteen and fifteen in

the Management Plan (Resource Protection and Management section) are designed to mitigate the impacts to desert tortoises within the Management Area and the immediate surrounding area.

Concentrating large volumes of OHV play within a restricted area would result in the continued loss of both habitat and individual animals. The current level of annual take of desert tortoises is estimated to be less than 10 animals. This take is the result of crushed burrows, raven predation, respiratory disease, shooting of individual animals, crushing by vehicles, and visitors taking them home. This level of take would continue until full implementation of the appropriate level of mitigation as determined through implementation of actions number 14 and 15 in the Management Plan.

Vehicle travel throughout the Management Area will have a minor negative impact on all other forms of wildlife. Nesting birds will be disturbed. Some small animals, such as rats, snakes, and lizards, will possibly be killed by direct impact from vehicles. A few burrowing animals will possibly be killed underground when their dens are crushed by vehicles. There will be the loss of some habitat due to camping and parking activities.

Development of the facilities will occupy potential wildlife habitat and will, therefore, have a minor negative impact. Commercial, recreational, or educational activities could possibly destroy vegetation or cause disturbances to resting, feeding, or breeding wildlife.

Acquisition of approximately 12,000 acres of private land, and the retention of approximately 12,400 acres of public land will have a moderate positive impact on wildlife. For the most part the native vegetation will remain intact within the Management Area. As the surrounding private lands are developed, the Management Area will become an island of native habitat.

Two existing guzzlers will be re-conditioned, and four new ones will be constructed within the Management Area and the zone of influence. These will increase the water available for wildlife such as fox, coyote, chukar, owl, red tail hawk, and other small animals, allowing the area to support greater numbers of individuals.

Minerals

Implementing the Management Plan will have a minor positive impact on the availability of minerals within the Management Area. Over 12,000 acres of private land will be acquired into federal ownership, including the subsurface mineral rights whenever possible. Federal ownership of these lands will ensure that the minerals remain available for future exploration.

Cultural

The actions in the Management Plan will have a moderate positive impact on the cultural resources within the Management Area. In accordance with guidelines in the *CDCA Plan*, sites not eligible for the National Register, but of local importance, will be incorporated into a comprehensive interpretive program for the Management Area. The sites will be identified, researched, and where necessary stabilized or protected (barriers).

Visual

The proposed action will result in a negligible impact to the visual values of the area. The Management Area would provide approximately 24,400 acres of open space in a rapidly changing rural residential area. However, the entire Management Area will be available for intensive recreation including OHV play. This will lead to the formation of trail and road scars.

Air Quality

Air quality in the Antelope and Victor Valleys will experience a minor negative impact as a result of the proposed action. The amount of vehicle exhaust emissions released into the atmosphere from vehicle related recreation would be negligible, and possibly less than what would occur if the area were developed for other uses.

The anticipated impact will come from soil surface disturbances. Vehicle use within the Management Area disturbs the soil and provides a source of fine loose dirt and dust particles. These particles become suspended in the air during wind storms and leave the boundaries of the Management Area as fugitive dust, which is commonly referred to as particulate matter-10 (PM-10).

Noise

Noise from activities within the Management Area will be a minor negative impact. During the day small aircraft will take-off from the lakebed and fly outside the Management Area. This will disturb the peace and tranquility of the local communities.

Noise from ground based vehicles consists of a light hum on busy weekends, with no discernible single source. Authorized activities also generate noise. The sound of special effects explosions for commercial filming will possibly be heard a few times a year in the community of El Mirage. The running of loud engines from cars participating in time trials on the lakebed will also possibly be heard in El Mirage (six days per year).

Hydrology

The Management Area overall will have a moderate negative impact on water resources. There will be no impact on underground water supplies. The headquarters facility will draw water from existing wells, therefore placing no additional demands on underground aquifers. The Management Area will pose no threat of contamination for ground water supplies. All restrooms will be fully self-contained, and all trash generated at the headquarters will be hauled to the nearest county landfill.

Development of the Management Area has the potential to have a moderate negative impact on the ability of surrounding communities to store surface runoff. The lakebed would not be available for the storage of large volumes of surface runoff as a result of the proposed action. Storing water on the lakebed will preclude recreational use. Therefore, alternative means of surface water storage will have to be located.

EL Mirage dry lakebed is the final destination point for surface water runoff from the watershed extending south into the San Gabriel Mountains. Increased development between the lakebed and these mountains will result in increased runoff. As water is channeled it picks up speed and travels farther. As the watershed continues to be developed, more and more surface runoff will reach El Mirage Dry Lake. Water does not soak into the lakebed, and it can take several months for it to evaporate.

Geology

The extensive use of OHVs within the Management Area will result in an overall moderate negative impact on the soils. Vehicle use will not be restricted to existing roads or trails. Some soils will be compacted, others will be broken down.

The use of vehicles throughout the Management Area will result in the loss of some vegetation and leave the soil exposed to erosion. In addition, the soil on routes of travel will become compacted, increasing runoff and making it difficult for vegetation to grow. As vehicles ride up and down the hillsides there will be a similar effect with the added possibility that gullies will form. The net effect will be increased wind and water erosion on these soils. This includes approximately 15% of the land in the Management Area.

The proposed action will have a minor negative impact to the dry lakebed. The normal everyday vehicle traffic would continue to crush and pulverize the top surface of the lakebed. This will be compounded by such activities as circle racing, the time trials and commercial filming. These activities involve vehicles repeatedly traveling over the same path. The impact to the surface from the repetitive vehicle traffic is the breakdown of the clay from a hard

packed surface to a fine powder. Most of these activities affect the top layer to a depth of approximately one inch.

On the lakebed, this will lead to the loss of soil by sheet erosion from the wind, and by the formation of gullies from water erosion. These losses will be slightly offset by the deposition of new sediments. Rain runoff will act to re-cement the top layer of the lakebed together forming a hard packed surface.

An increase in erosion on the lands north of the lakebed will result in an increase in the deposition of soils on the lakebed. However, these new soils will consist mostly of decomposed granite and very little clay. Over time the new sediment will mix with the clay of the lakebed resulting in a surface that does not compact as hard as the existing surface.

Some of the management actions are intended to restore and maintain the lakebed to its historical size. These actions will have a moderate positive impact. Encroaching vegetation and dirt mounds will be removed and holes will be filled (with material from mounds on the lakebed).

Wilderness and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

There are no wilderness study areas, or areas of critical environmental concern, within or adjacent to the affected environment.

2. Resource Uses

Recreation

Implementation of the El Mirage Management Plan would have a major positive impact on recreation. Retention of existing public land and the acquisition of private land into federal stewardship would guarantee the availability of public recreational opportunities. This is a benefit that would be enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of visitors. Furthermore, implementation of the Management Plan would result in visitor services (first-aid, maintained roads, restrooms) that are designed to enhance the visitors' experience.

The amount of public land available and designated for OHV play as a result of full development of the Management Area would be significantly increased. However, all public land in the zone of influence (outside of the Management Area) would no longer be available for OHV play. Key routes of travel will be designated open on these lands (Illustrations 4, 5, and 6 in the Management Plan).

A few popular camping, parking, and OHV play areas will be closed to vehicle use within the zone of influence. This will benefit non-motorized recreation activities such as hiking, horseback riding, and wildlife observation. The displaced vehicle use will result in temporary moderate negative impacts. Current visitor patterns will be disrupted, and some of the displaced visitors will attempt to re-locate in areas that are not designated for such use.

The land within the Management Area will be closed to both shooting and hunting. This will have a negligible impact on these activities. The area is currently open to shotgun shooting only. There are thousands of acres of land outside the Management Area available for this activity. There is no known hunting activity within the Management Area other that the recreational shooting of rabbits. Eliminating the discharge of firearms would contribute toward creating a more peaceful environment appropriate for a recreational setting.

The consequences of confining OHV play to within the final boundaries of the Management Area, and the subsequent closures of historic camping and staging areas outside of the Management Area, are acceptable to both landowners and recreationists. The proposed action represents a compromise between these two groups that are often diametrically opposed to each other. Landowners wish to confine, restrict, or abolish OHV use. Off-highway vehicle users traditionally want to open, leave open, or acquire more lands for riding opportunities.

Mining and Grazing

Implementing the Management Plan will have a minor positive impact on mining operations. Over 12,000 acres of private land within the Management Area would be acquired into federal ownership and would become available for mining. Existing federal procedures will accommodate mineral exploration and mining operations. However, the lakebed itself will be withdrawn from mineral entry and will not be available for mining. All public land within the zone of influence will remain open for mineral exploration and mining.

There will be no impact on grazing in the affected environment.

Authorized Activities

Recreation, commercial, education, non-profit, and military activities will all recognize a minor benefit. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in use of the permit system. All existing activities will be allowed to continue.

There will be no impact to the existing right-of-way for the utility corridor running through the east portion of the Management Area, parallel to HWY 395.

3. *Social and Economic Factors*

Land Tenure

The net impact of consolidating the land in public ownership will have a major positive benefit. Development of the Management Area will reduce trespass; provide opportunities for recreation and tourism; retain large open space; and provide a setting for commercial activities, such as product testing and filming. Funding will be provided primarily by visitors through their participation in the California Green Sticker Program and from entrance and permit fees.

Landowners within the Management Area will be made aware of the plans to implement the proposed action. All land will be acquired at fair market value. This would have a major negative impact on the landowners who do not wish to sell (estimated to be approximately 10% of the affected landowners). This would be a major positive benefit to landowners who have been unable to sell their land in part because of the existing recreation related activities that occur.

Most of the land in the zone of influence will remain unclassified, and will be available for disposal. The impacts of this action were documented for the *CDCA Plan* (1980). The analysis is contained within the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Plan, Section V (Environmental Consequences), segment 17, Land Tenure Adjustment, page E-82.

Much of the land proposed for acquisition is within the fire tax assessment district for the community of El Mirage. Acquisition and conversion of these lands from private to public will have a moderate negative impact by removing these parcels from the tax base. This was recognized by the community of El Mirage early in the planning process. The major positive benefit of solving historic recreation related problems through the creation of the Management Area outweighs the potential loss in revenue.

Local Communities

The proposed action will have a moderate positive impact on the surrounding communities overall. The Management Area will attract thousands of visitors each year. Providing services for these visitors will result in increased business and sales revenue. An additional benefit will be the fencing of the Management Area and the subsequent control of OHV access through the local communities. The incidence of trespass and associated problems (noise, dust, trash) will be greatly reduced.

Development of the Management Area will have a minor positive impact on the two existing restaurants within the community of El Mirage. As the only eating establishments in El Mirage they should continue to receive the visitors' business. Furthermore, permanent concession operations will not be permitted within the Management Area for similar services that are available in the adjacent communities. There would possibly be an initial minor negative impact due to a disruption of the current visitor use patterns. Erecting the boundary barrier will necessitate a change in existing visitor patterns from accessing the restaurants on OHVs to accessing these restaurants only on street legal vehicles. It is anticipated that any initial impact will be offset by an increase in total visitor use.

Fencing the perimeter of the Management Area and controlling OHV play outside of the boundaries will greatly enhance the property values in the surrounding area. This action will reestablish the quiet rural atmosphere that is preferred by the local communities.

The benefit of restricting OHV play outside of the Management Area will be offset to some degree by the loss of freedom for the local residents. They would no longer be able to access the Management Area by riding their OHVs directly from their residences. They will have to transport all non-street legal vehicles into the Management Area via established entry points. The issue of OHV trespass within the local communities may surface again if many of the violators are themselves from the local communities.

Emergency Services

There will be a moderate positive impact on the emergency services within the affected environment with the proposed action. The BLM law enforcement rangers will supplement the efforts of the County Sheriff and the California Highway Patrol to control recreation use within the zone of influence; this includes trespass, littering, and illegal shooting. The local communities will also benefit from the availability of the Management Area personnel for responding to medical and fire emergencies.

B. Alternative B, No Action

1. Natural Resource Values

Climate and Topography

There will be no impacts to the climate or the topography in the affected environment.

Vegetation

In the short-term, there will be a major negative impact to the vegetation in the affected environment under the no action alternative. Vegetation would continue to be exposed to damage from unmanaged vehicle use throughout the Management Area and the zone of influence. A small segment of the unusual plant assemblage of Western Mojave Desert Mojave Saltbush in the north-eastern portion of the zone of influence would continue to be exposed to continued route proliferation.

Approximately a dozen Joshua trees a year will continue to be burned down and shot. Residents of nearby communities will dig up and remove numerous cactus plants for transplanting to their residences. Existing roads and trails will continue to widen as OHV riders seek a smoother course of travel. Camping and parking activities will result in additional dirt clearings with a loss of vegetation. All these actions will result in an acceleration of soil erosion.

There will be no facilities or permitted events, therefore there will be no impacts from these activities.

In the long-term, leaving the approximately 12,000 acres of land proposed for acquisition in private ownership will allow development to occur and will lead to the loss of most, if not all, native vegetation. Existing public land will remain available for disposal, and will most likely be traded for private lands in other areas through the Western Mojave Land Tenure Adjustment Project. The end result will probably be commercial and/or residential development, and the subsequent loss of all native vegetation in the affected environment.

Wildlife

Wildlife will experience a major negative impact under the no action alternative. In the short-term, impacts will be caused by unmanaged OHV play throughout the affected environment. In the long-term, impacts would result from the disposal of public land and the eventual development of the land for either commercial, industrial, or residential uses.

All impacts to wildlife, as stated in the proposed action, will occur with two exceptions. First, any existing populations of Mohave ground squirrel will go undetected; therefore, if they do exist they probably will not receive appropriate levels of management. Second, habitat for the desert tortoise will continue to be impacted by OHV play until the entire area is closed to all OHV use. Inventories will not be conducted in the near future on the land within the Management Area. Eventually inventories will

be conducted on the parcels of private land as they are developed, and on the public lands as they are disposed.

The entire affected environment is Category III (interim) habitat and will not be managed for viable populations of desert tortoises. The final outcome as to how desert tortoises will be managed on the existing public land within the affected environment will be dependent upon the habitat management plan for the western Mojave desert tortoise population.

Continued shooting in the affected environment will result in the loss of numerous individual animals. The two existing guzzlers will go unrepaired, and no new guzzlers will be constructed. Development on private land within the affected environment will destroy native wildlife habitat and eliminate sites for foraging, food, and shelter.

In the long-term, assuming that all opportunities for OHV play and non-motorized recreation are foregone in the affected environment, wildlife will experience a major negative impact. The public land will be made available for disposal or exchange as per the *CDCA Plan*. In all likelihood, the area will be developed for subdivisions or industry. Little if any native wildlife habitat will remain.

Minerals

The no action alternative will have a minor negative impact on the availability of minerals within the affected environment. Minerals will remain available on public land until such time as the land (and minerals) is disposed of or exchanged as per the *CDCA Plan*.

Cultural

The no action alternative will have a minor negative impact on cultural resources within the affected environment. No action means no wide-scale inventory to locate potential sites, and no protective measures to stabilize known existing sites. In the short-term, cultural sites that have been identified will most likely not receive the appropriate management they require. Potential long-term loss and impacts will continue.

In the long-term, the BLM is required to inventory for, and to protect, cultural resources on public land prior to any actions, including disposal. However, the known sites are not considered significant, and therefore it is unlikely they will require mitigation prior to disposal of the land. It is not probable that the private land in the area will be inventoried, or that potential impacts to sites on private property will be mitigated. There will be no efforts to interpret potential cultural sites located.

Visual

The visual resources in the affected environment will receive a negligible impact under the no action alternative.

In the short-term, unmanaged OHV play will continue throughout the affected environment. This will result in additional trails and routes of travel that interrupt the landscape. In the long-term, assuming disposal or exchange of all public land, the existing open space would be lost to residential and commercial development.

Air Quality

The no action alternative will overall have a minor negative impact on the air quality. In the short-term, OHV play will cause similar impacts as the proposed action. In the long-term, all recreation opportunities will be foregone. As development occurs there will be a net deterioration of the air quality due to pollutants from commercial, industrial, and residential sources.

Noise

In the short-term, noise from activities on the lakebed will continue to create a minor negative impact. Use of aircraft could go unrestricted resulting in no control of noise impacts to adjacent residents. In the long-term, noise impacts from activities within the Management Area would diminish as the activities cease to occur.

Hydrology

The no action alternative will have a minor negative impact on water resources. In the short-term, the existing situation will remain unchanged. In the long-term, residential and commercial development will result in a minor negative impact on domestic water supplies.

There would be an increased demand for water to meet additional household, landscaping, and commercial needs. There would be increased amounts of solid and sewage waste requiring disposal, potentially increasing the threat of groundwater contamination. Increased development in the surrounding area would also lead to additional run-off that would flood the lakebed on a more regular basis. The use of the lakebed for the retention of rain runoff could possibly be an acceptable use.

Geology

The no action alternative will have a net moderate negative impact to the soils in the affected environment, similar to the impacts in the proposed action. In the short-term, off highway vehicle use

will continue to compact some soils and break up others. In the long-term, the soils will be disturbed from construction activities associated with residential and commercial development.

Impacts to the lakebed will be minor in the no action alternative. All existing uses and associated impacts will cease on the lakebed with the elimination of the recreation opportunities. The lakebed will most likely be used as a storage site for rain runoff water. The invasion of plants and the formation of mounds will continue.

Wilderness and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

There are no wilderness study areas or areas of critical environmental concern within, or adjacent to, the affected environment.

2. Resource Uses

Recreation

The no action alternative will have a major negative impact on recreation in the affected environment. Not implementing the Management Plan (taking no action) would eventually preclude all recreation opportunities in the El Mirage and Shadow Mountain area.

In the short-term, existing recreation opportunities will continue to be available on the existing 1,250 acres of public land on the lakebed. Other tracts of public land in the area would be managed under guidelines in the *CDCA Plan* consistent with unclassified land. Off-highway vehicle play would not be allowed, and motor vehicle use would be restricted to existing routes of travel. Trespass on private land would most likely continue.

In the long-term, there will be a concerted effort by the local communities to close the area to OHV use. Local residents have been demanding a solution to the present problems for several years. Furthermore, the current pattern of subdivision and zoning of the land into small tracts indicates future higher density residential development. Residential development around the lakebed will not be compatible with the existing recreational uses. Without the acquisition of private land on and around the lakebed, existing recreational uses will be displaced as private land is developed, and as public land in the area is disposed.

In response to an anticipated public demand to close the area to OHV use, the vehicle access designation will be closed on all public land on the lakebed and in the Shadow Mountains. This land will be disposed of as the practical way to resolve the trespass issue.

Closing the El Mirage and Shadow Mountain area would displace approximately 110,000 visitors per year. Trying to focus this displaced OHV use into other legally designated riding areas will be a major task. There will be an increase in OHV related trespass in areas that are not designated for OHV play. Some of the displaced visitors will relocate to other areas in the Victor Valley and will cause the same type of recreation related problems that are present at El Mirage.

Recreation activities other than OHV play would also be negatively impacted. The lakebed serves as the setting for the recreational use of ultra-light aircraft, landsailors, model airplanes, and vehicle land speed trials. These activities require large open space and a hard packed surface. There are few alternative sites available in southern California that are capable of providing the opportunities found at El Mirage.

In the no action alternative, there will be a negligible effect on the activities of hunting and the shooting of shotguns. Both will be allowed to continue. This will benefit visitors who engage in these activities. The shooting will adversely affect all other visitors to the area. Gunfire by its very nature tends to disturb most visitors. They do not know who is shooting, what they are shooting, why they are shooting, or at what they are shooting. Furthermore, visitors and local residents will be at risk of being struck by a bullet from unsafe shooting practices.

Mining and Grazing

Mining and grazing activities will receive a moderate negative impact under the no action alternative. Opportunities for mining and grazing would be foregone as the public lands are made available for disposal or exchange as per the *CDCA Plan*.

Authorized Activities

Opportunities for authorized activities will have a major negative impact in the no action alternative. In the short-term, commercial filming will continue on the lakebed until development on surrounding private lands will diminish the value of the location. Military, recreation, and commercial activities will be limited to the lakebed until such time as the public land is disposed.

In the long-term, impacts to authorized activities would be similar to the impacts to recreation. All opportunities would be foregone with disposal of the public land on and around the lakebed.

3. Social and Economic Factors

Land Tenure

The no action alternative will have a net minor negative impact on the lands in the affected environment. Approximately 12,400 acres of public land will be available for exchange. In the short-term, landowners will have to resolve the trespass issue on their own. Eventually, the area will be developed by private interests and all existing recreation related uses will be displaced.

In the long-term, the disposal of public land in the El Mirage and Shadow Mountain area will provide additional land to the local tax base. Once the land is privately developed El Mirage would realize a minor positive benefit from additional tax revenue. Conversely, the loss of opportunities for visitor related businesses would be a moderate negative impact. Upon full development the Management Area will have the capacity for several hundred thousand visitors each year, with the potential for generating thousands of dollars in local revenue from recreation related services.

Local Communities

The local communities will receive a moderate negative impact under the no action alternative. The proposed action is in direct response to resolving the recreation related issues confronting the local communities. In the short-term, taking no action will not resolve these issues. The solutions to such issues as trespass, littering, and vandalism would again be the responsibility of local residents and the County Sheriff.

In the long-term, there will be additional negative impacts. Many of the residents who live in the local communities engage in recreation activities within the Management Area. Instead of a 5 or 10 minute drive these people would have to travel for at least forty minutes to the next nearest OHV play area. Furthermore, there would be the loss of a large undeveloped open space which currently generates feelings of a rural atmosphere.

Emergency Services

The no action alternative will have a moderate negative impact on the existing level of emergency services in the affected environment. In the short-term, BLM's presence in the affected environment will be directed toward closing all public land to OHV play.

In the long-term, funds would no longer be available for the three BLM law enforcement rangers assigned to the Management Area. The local communities would continue to be responsible for providing emergency services throughout the affected environment.

V. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

In this section the impacts are reviewed in the context of what would result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

The geographic area of analysis varies from resource to resource. The general area of the analysis is the eastern Antelope Valley and the entire Victor Valley. The cumulative impacts are based on the likely outcome of the scenarios developed for the proposed action and the no action alternatives.

A. Historical Impacts

The natural resources within the Management Area have already been impacted from over one hundred years of human occupation. The original town of El Mirage (complete with a post office and school) was located on the north side of the lakebed at the turn of the century, in the heart of the proposed Management Area. Historical uses within the Management Area include: a large cattle ranch; a glass manufacturing plant; an experimental rice field on the lakebed; an oil well north of the lakebed; approximately 12 recent (within the last 20 years) permanent residents - including one with an airfield; numerous miles of roads and flood control channels (constructed in preparation for residential development); and over 100 mines and exploratory pits.

For the last thirty years the proposed Management Area has received intensive recreation and commercial use. These uses have gone unmanaged, leading to unacceptable impacts to the environment. There have been impacts to the vegetation, wildlife, and soil from OHV play, camping, shooting, product testing, filming, competitive events, grazing, military exercises, utility corridors, and non-motorized recreation activities. For the most part these activities have occurred on both private and public land with little or no restrictions.

B. Proposed Action Alternative

1. Natural Resource Values

Climate and Topography

There will be no cumulative impacts to either the climate or the topography as a result of the proposed action.

Vegetation

Implementation of the proposed action will have a significant positive effect on the cumulative impacts to vegetation. The Management Area will contribute to the impacts on vegetation in both a negative and positive manner. Confining OHV play within the Management Area will intensify the impacts to the vegetation. There would be more crushing and up-rooting of vegetation associated with motorized vehicle recreation. But on the positive side, in the zone of influence outside the Management Area there would be reduced impacts on the public land where the vehicle access is either closed or restricted to designated routes of travel. Impacts to vegetation on private land within the zone of influence would also be reduced as OHV related trespass on private land is eliminated.

Development trends throughout the Antelope and Victor Valley are increasingly displacing native vegetation. It is feasible, and likely, that the private land surrounding the Management Area will be developed for residential, agricultural, and commercial uses. As this occurs there will be less open space available where native vegetation may exist. Creation of the Management Area would offset this to some degree by maintaining open space. Even though OHV recreation would be allowed here, this is a less destructive activity to native vegetation than urbanization.

The proposed action is consistent with guidelines in the *CDCA Plan* in regards to protecting the Western Mojave Desert Mojave Saltbush Assemblage. There will be no cumulative impact to this unusual plant assemblage in the northeastern corner of the zone of influence.

Wildlife

There will be significant positive results for wildlife from the cumulative impacts of the proposed action. Parallel to the impacts occurring to vegetation, development throughout the high desert is displacing wildlife habitat at a rapid pace. Expanding communities, highway improvements, utility corridors, military reservations, and mining operations are all combining to create significant cumulative impacts to wildlife.

The proposed action is in part a response to the cumulative impacts affecting the ecosystem and the natural habitat of wildlife. The Management Plan calls for restricting and confining OHV play from 100,000 acres to 24,400 acres in the El Mirage area. The desert wide goal is to locate all OHV play into such managed OHV recreation areas. It is anticipated that these actions will have a positive contribution to the cumulative impacts affecting wildlife.

Full development of the Management Area will not jeopardize the continued existence of the desert tortoise. Regardless of the decision to implement the proposed action or the no action alternative, future development and management of the land in the El Mirage area will not be compatible with management of the tortoise. There are too many existing impacts in this area to maintain viable populations.

The area is classified as Category III (interim) desert tortoise habitat in recognition of the existing impacts. Such impacts include: residential, commercial, and agricultural development; a large percentage of private land intermingled with public land; and degradation of the existing habitat from OHV play, highways, and the construction of transmission lines.

The actions contained in the Management Plan represent an attempt to provide reasonable mitigation for the tortoise, and to minimize the number of decisions regarding tortoise management that are in fact deferred to a later date. The El Mirage Cooperative Management Area is just one piece of the puzzle regarding sound and efficient management of both the desert tortoise and off-highway vehicle play in the California Desert Conservation Area.

The Management Area is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Western Mojave Land Tenure Adjustment (LTA) Project. The primary goal of the LTA project is the consolidation of scattered and segmented tracts of public land into large manageable blocks. As a result of this consolidation, BLM will be better able to manage natural resources and the Air Force will be better able to manage and utilize the airspace. The LTA Project will in part utilize public land surrounding the Management Area as an exchange base for the consolidation of public land within Category I and II tortoise habitat. This will also assist with the goal of establishing quality tortoise habitat.

Currently, BLM is in the process of preparing a habitat management plan for the western Mohave desert tortoise population. The habitat management plan will provide overall direction for management of desert tortoises throughout the CDCA, including OHV play areas. Upon completion of the habitat management plan, BLM will review the tortoise mitigation for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area to assure appropriateness, compatibility, and consistency. There is the potential for changing the mitigation package based upon new information contained in the habitat management plan. If this is the case, the USFWS will be involved informally, and formal consultation will be reinitiated if appropriate.

Minerals

The proposed action will preclude any cumulative impacts to mineral resources. There are several minerals present within the affected environment that may some day be economically feasible to remove. The proposed action will ensure the availability of these resources. This will have a positive benefit on the availability of minerals in the high desert when reviewing the cumulative impacts of other developments. There is increasing pressure to set aside large blocks of land for wilderness, the military is attempting to acquire more land, and there is an ever increasing spread of urban development. The combined affects of these actions are reducing the availability of minerals on large blocks of land.

Cultural

The proposed action will preclude any cumulative impacts to cultural resources. There will be a representative sampling of the Management Area to locate potential cultural resources. All sites located will be appropriately inventoried, recorded, and protected. Sites located on public land that is retained within the zone of influence will be protected through vehicle closures, or the designation of open and closed routes.

Visual

There will be an insignificant cumulative impact on the visual values within the Victor Valley from the proposed action. One beneficial impact of creating the Management Area would be the preservation of open space. Conversely, there would be trail proliferation and the subsequent scarring of hillsides from OHV play.

Air Quality

The recreational activity proposed for the Management Area will constitute an insignificant cumulative impact on the air quality of the high desert. Urban growth with the associated dust from construction, auto travel, and the Yermo Cogeneration Plan represent the most significant sources of regional cumulative impacts. These sources are dominated by the impact of polluted air that rises out of the Los Angeles basin and flows into the high desert.

Noise

The Management Area will not contribute to the cumulative impacts on noise. Vehicles and activities within the Management Area will be patrolled to enforce noise standards as set forth in the California Vehicle Code. The area is large enough to provide opportunities for quiet and solitude.

Hydrology

Activities within the Management Area will not affect subsurface water flows. There will be a slight increase in surface runoff within the Management Area due to a loss of vegetation. This will not contribute significantly to the cumulative impacts on the hydrology of the high desert.

The lakebed would not be available for the storage of rain runoff, and this would affect the regional development of a flood control system. There would be the need to coordinate with the county for flood control plans for south of the Management Area. The focus of such coordination should be on assessing alternative means for disposing of rain run-off. This could include on site retention, the routing of run-off to east of the lakebed, or the development of catch and retention basins.

Geology

The soils within the Management Area will not be irreversibly damaged. As a result, the proposed action will have an insignificant cumulative impact on desert soils.

Within the Management Area, the intense use of OHVs will degrade the soils and result in trail proliferation. Other large projects that will add to soil surface disturbances in the high desert include proposed upgrades and widening to Highways 395 and 58, Spangler Hills, Stoddard and Johnson Valley OHV recreation areas, Twenty Nine Palms Marine Base, Luz solar power plant, continued use and expansion of the Army's National Training Center, expansion of urban developments, utility corridors, and dispersed recreation.

Wilderness and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Implementation of the Management Plan will have an insignificant impact on wilderness and areas of critical environmental concern. On a desert-wide basis, implementation of the proposed action should contribute to a reduction of the cumulative impacts to wilderness areas. Development of the Management Area will provide OHV enthusiasts with a legal place to ride. Confining such play within the Management Area will also provide opportunities to educate visitors in the respectful use of public lands. This will be accomplished through the dissemination of information at controlled access points.

2. Resource Uses

Recreation

Development of the Management Area will significantly contribute to the opportunities for recreation in the CDCA. Recreation

accounts for the largest use within the Management Area, and the use of OHVs is the major activity. This trend will continue with implementation of the proposed action. The Management Area is intended to resolve conflicts between existing uses and the local communities and landowners. The intent behind the proposed action is to establish an area where all existing activities can continue to occur.

It is anticipated that between 3,000 and 4,000 visitors will be displaced upon implementation of the proposed action. These visitors will be displaced from staging areas located outside the perimeter of the Management Area. It is estimated that approximately 30,000 visitors have already been displaced. Most of these visitors no longer visit the area due to the increase in BLM patrols and law enforcement. Much of this use has transferred to other OHV recreation areas, but some of it has also relocated on private and public lands not intended to support this use.

Vehicle access is either being closed or limited on public land within the zone of influence to prevent displaced OHV play from re-locating to here. The Law Enforcement Rangers assigned to the Management Area will assist the local law enforcement agencies with enforcing trespass laws in the zone of influence around the Management Area. As a result there should be minimal cumulative impacts from displaced recreation visitors.

There will be no cumulative impact to hunting or the shooting of shotguns for recreation. There are thousands of acres of public land available for these uses throughout the high desert. There are also several private facilities available in southern California that provide opportunities for shooting shotguns.

Mining and Grazing

Mining and grazing will both be allowed to continue within the Management Area. Therefore, there will be no cumulative impact to these activities.

Authorized Activities

The cumulative effect of allowing authorized activities to occur within the Management Area is significant and beneficial overall. The nearby megalopolis of Los Angeles is approaching 15 million people. The local Victor Valley is expected to double in population within the next 5 to 10 years. A growing business base requires outdoor opportunities for research and development. The close proximity to Los Angeles and the variety of terrain at the Management Area provide an excellent combination that attracts numerous businesses, which in turn provides jobs and generates tax revenue.

Three of the major OHV manufacturers have obtained land use permits for product testing and development at El Mirage. Several other permits have been issued for similar types of activity. The Management Area also provides valuable opportunities for commercial filming. The average television commercial costs approximately $125,000, and dozens of these are filmed on the dry lakebed each year. There are also several television series which shoot at the lakebed, and the average cost of filming one episode is $750,000 to $1.2 million. Filming companies spend money locally on hotels, gas, equipment rental, hardware supplies, and labor. In 1988 commercial filming companies spent over $600,000 throughout the Antelope Valley in association with filming projects.

3. Social and Economic Factors

Land Tenure

Consolidation of the land into public ownership within the Management Area will have a significant and beneficial cumulative impact on the Antelope and Victor Valleys.

Implementation of the proposed action will result in a land status pattern that is practical and manageable. Land within the Management Area will be consolidated in public ownership, and the scattered tracts of public land around the Management Area will be disposed. This would maintain large open space for recreation use.

The creation of legal OHV play areas within the high desert will provide riders with the opportunities they need to engage in their sport. This would assist law enforcement agencies in reducing OHV related trespass in a large geographical region stretching from Los Angeles to the Victor Valley.

Local Communities

Establishing the Management Area will resolve several long standing issues concerning trespass and OHV play and will, therefore, have a significant impact on the local communities. Cumulative impacts associated with OHV play in the local communities will be greatly reduced.

The Management Area will create business opportunities and should provide a boost to the economy in general. Land acquired in federal ownership will displace some of the tax base of the local community. This could be replaced through revenue generated from salaries and taxes on local businesses that serve the visitors. The net benefit of the Management Area would be to bring visitor dollars into the local community.

The visitors engaging in recreation activities at El Mirage will spend thousands of dollars on recreation equipment each year.

There will be an increased need for such items as motorhomes, OHVs, camping equipment, kites, race car parts, ice, soda, food, and gas.

Emergency Services

There will be an insignificant cumulative impact on the emergency services in the Antelope and Victor Valleys. The proposed action will provide emergency services to assist with resolving long standing issues concerning law enforcement and first aid. This will benefit residents and visitors throughout San Bernardino County. By providing these services within the Management Area there would be a reduced need to pull in emergency equipment and personnel from other areas.

4. Summary

The Management Area is a heavily impacted area. There is a long history of human occupation, use, and development of this area. Implementation of the proposed action is intended to resolve some of the conflicts concerning land use in the area. The Management Area would establish permanent opportunities for visitors to engage in recreation activities, and would resolve the long standing problems associated with such use. Implementation of the Management Plan would result in a reduction of resource related impacts. The public land within the zone of influence that is disposed of would most likely be developed.

The most reasonable foreseeable scenario that can be presented given: 1) the historical use of the Management Area; 2) the present trends in land use; and 3) the projected future development of the area, is that implementation of the proposed action would create an open space for recreation and commercial uses surrounded by urban development. Land development in the Antelope and Victor Valleys is proceeding at a very rapid pace. The Management Area is rapidly being surrounded by such development. To the south is the community of El Mirage, to the west is Los Angeles County and rural development, to the north is the community of Shadow Mountain Village and Edwards Air Force Base, to the east is the community of Adelanto and Highway 395.

C. Alternative B, No Action

1. Natural Resource Values

Climate and Topography

There will be no cumulative impacts to the climate or the topography as a result of the no action alternative.

Vegetation

The no action alternative will have a significant contribution to the cumulative impacts on the vegetation in the Antelope and Victor Valleys. The immediate cumulative impact to the vegetation in the no action alternative will be the continued unrestricted use of OHVs on approximately 100,000 acres of public and private land. This will result in widespread trail proliferation, and the crushing and uprooting of plants as a result of impacts from vehicles. In the long-term, not acquiring and blocking-in the Management Area under federal ownership, and leaving the public land available for disposal, would most likely result in the eventual development of the land. In this case most, if not all, of the native vegetation would be removed. This would occur on private land throughout the Antelope and Victor Valleys.

Throughout the high desert, native vegetation will still be preserved in large tracts at Edwards Air Force Base, at Fort Irwin, at Stoddard and Johnson Valley OHV recreation areas, on public land retained through the LTA Project, at Joshua Tree National Park, at county and state parks, and on large tracts of the National Forest south of the Management Area. In addition, large tracts of desert land will be retained in federal stewardship and managed by the BLM for limited use. This includes wilderness areas, areas of critical environmental concern, and tracts where vehicle access is limited to preserve a variety of natural resource values.

Land within the zone of influence that contains the Western Mojave Desert Mojave Saltbush plant assemblage will be managed according to guidelines in the *CDCA Plan*. The no action alternative will have no cumulative impact on this unusual plant assemblage in the northeast corner of the zone of influence.

Wildlife

The impacts to wildlife will parallel the impacts to vegetation in the area. The cumulative impact of the no action alternative will be significant and will involve the continued loss of habitat throughout the Antelope and Victor Valleys. This would occur from expanding urban development. Increased development in the El Mirage/Shadow Mountain region would eventually lead to the displacement of the current OHV play. This use would relocate in a variety of areas, and would most likely result in impacts to wildlife on public and private lands where OHV play is not authorized.

If all the existing use was successfully relocated to other OHV recreation areas, the impact of adding 110,000 visitors to the other OHV play areas would be significant. This will further degrade the quality of the ecosystems in these other areas resulting in the loss of habitat and impacts to the wildlife.

Minerals

There will be a significant impact to the availability of minerals in the no action alternative. The impact of the no action alternative will be a reduction in the availability of minerals within the Antelope and Victor Valleys. There will be the loss of potential mineral resources at the lakebed and within the Shadow Mountains if the land is disposed.

Cultural

The cumulative impact to cultural resources under the no action alternative will be significant. Potential cultural sites in the El Mirage/Shadow Mountain area have been heavily impacted from exposure to intensive OHV play. Only during the disposal process would sites likely be identified, surveyed, and protected if appropriate. On private land sites would continue to remain vulnerable to loss through development. The cumulative impact will most likely be the loss of additional cultural sites within the Victor Valley.

Visual

There will be a significant cumulative impact on the visual values of the western Victor Valley under the no action alternative. The outcome will most likely be the development of the Management Area for residential, agricultural, and commercial uses. This would result in the cumulative impact of a loss of one of the largest existing open spaces in the western Victor Valley.

Air Quality

The cumulative impact from the no action alternative will be insignificant in the short-term. In the long-term, the impact will increase significantly with an increase in auto emissions. There will be a gradual increase in dust from private lands associated with development. This would eventually be reduced as the land is landscaped and paved, unless there was agricultural development (unlikely given the slope of the land).

Noise

The cumulative impact for noise in the no action alternative will be dependent on how the land is zoned and what uses are eventually allowed. In the short-term, the residents of the local communities will be impacted from the noise associated with OHVs that will continue to operate in trespass, and from small aircraft that will utilize the lakebed. In the long-term, noise associated with industry could increase if the private land is developed for this purpose.

Hydrology

There will be no cumulative impact on the hydrology of the region in the no action alternative. Any uses for the land in the affected environment which involve development will increase runoff and the need for drainage management. In the no action alternative the lakebed would be available for the storage of rain runoff water. This would simplify the design and development of a flood control system and would benefit the region as a whole.

Geology

The soils will realize an insignificant cumulative impact under the no action alternative. The cumulative impact of the no action alternative will consist of disturbance of soils in one more area within the Victor Valley by urban development. Most all soils in the affected environment on less than a 20% slope will be disturbed by either residential, commercial, or agricultural development.

The existing uses will cause accelerated erosion in the short-term, but will not result in any irreparable impacts. In the long-term, some of the developments will probably result in compaction or relocation of the soils, leading to long-term impacts.

Wilderness and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

There will be no significant cumulative impacts on wilderness areas or areas of critical environmental concern in the no action alternative. It is reasonable to expect that some of the displaced OHV use will relocate in sensitive areas where no OHV play should occur, such as wilderness areas or areas of critical environmental concern. However, such sensitive areas are a considerable distance from El Mirage. It is anticipated that the majority of OHV play will relocate in other legal OHV play areas, and in areas closer to population centers, possibly on the outskirts of Victorville and Apple Valley.

2. Resource Uses

Recreation

There would be significant negative cumulative impacts to recreation opportunities in the no action alternative, especially OHV play. None of the current recreation uses on or around the lakebed will be allowed to continue. In southern California many historic OHV play areas have been closed in recent years, and much of this use has relocated to El Mirage. Such historical use areas that have been closed to OHV recreation include: Devore, the foothills around Rancho Cucamonga and San Bernardino, Windy Point, Summit and Honda Valleys, and all of Los Angeles and Riverside Counties.

There will be several undesirable effects if the no action alternative is implemented. Many of the residents of the Antelope and Victor Valleys engage in OHV recreation. If the El Mirage-Shadow Mountain area is closed to this use, some of these people will be more inclined to ride in local spots where OHV play is not intended, rather than load-up the vehicles and drive an additional hour to the next closest OHV recreation area. This will result in increased trespass throughout southern California, and will place additional demands on local law enforcement agencies.

Hunting and the shooting of shotguns will not be impacted by the no action alternative. Both these activities will be allowed to continue.

Mining and Grazing

The no action alternative will have a significant cumulative impact on mining and grazing. The impact will be an increase in the loss of mining and grazing opportunities throughout the Antelope and Victor Valleys. As public land in the Management Area and the zone of influence are disposed of they will be susceptible to development. This could preclude opportunities for mining and grazing. There is a rapidly increasing loss of land available for these two activities in the high desert. Military reservations, wilderness, and urban development all are expanding, and they preclude mining and grazing.

Authorized Activities

Authorized activities will experience a significant cumulative impact as a result of the no action alternative. Similar to mining and grazing, suitable places for these types of activities to occur are becoming fewer and fewer. The cumulative effect will be a reduction in the amount of commercial filming, product testing, and research and development that occur within the Victor Valley. There would be an associated decline in the amount of funds spent locally to support these activities.

3. Social and Economic Factors

Land Tenure

There will be an insignificant cumulative impact on the land tenure as a result of the no action alternative. Public land in the El Mirage/Shadow Mountain area will remain available for disposal as identified by the *CDCA Plan*. The lakebed would also eventually be classified for disposal. This land will most likely be used as part of an exchange base for the LTA Project. The end result will be the disposal of small tracts of public land, and the consolidation of public land into large manageable blocks. The difference between the proposed action and no action alternative

is that land in the Management Area (proposed action) would be identified for OHV play, while public land consolidated in the LTA Project (no action) would probably be closed to OHV play.

Local Communities

There will be a significant impact on the local communities under the no action alternative. The cumulative impact of the no action alternative will be a continuation of the existing situation with OHV trespass, trash, vandalism, and other impacts associated with uncontrolled recreation use of the area. The law enforcement agencies responsible for the area presently do not have sufficient resources to control these problems.

The community of El Mirage would not realize any negative impacts to its tax base. There would be no loss to the tax base because private land would not be placed into Federal ownership as a result of land acquisition. Business opportunities for providing goods and services to visitors would be precluded, but not business opportunities in general.

Emergency Services

There will be an insignificant cumulative impact to emergency services in the area under the no action alternative. Fewer emergency services will be available, however, the demand for these services will also be less as a result of closing the area for recreational use. The need for emergency services in relation to recreation will be replaced by the need for emergency services in relation to urban development. The changing need for emergency services would be the responsibility of local and county government.

4. Summary

There are going to be cumulative impacts to the El Mirage/Shadow Mountain area regardless of what action is taken. This area is on the peripheral of one of the largest population centers in the nation. The most reasonable foreseeable scenario for this area is that in the no action alternative the existing private land would be allowed to develop along with the Antelope and Victor Valleys. The scattered tracts of public land would be exchanged and developed. Most all the natural vegetation and wildlife would be destroyed.

In this scenario it would not be possible to retain and manage the lakebed for recreation. The majority of visitors that use the lakebed engage in OHV recreation. It is likely that much of the existing use would be displaced into other areas. The OHV play that does not relocate to other legal riding areas would result in continued trespass, OHV trail proliferation, littering, and the

general degradation of the natural systems. These impacts would be most intense within the Victor Valley, but would also be felt throughout the high desert as visitors seek new areas for OHV play.

VI. IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Implementation of the proposed action, the *Management Plan for the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area*, will not result in the significant irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

Taking no action will allow existing public land to be exchanged for private land in other areas. In addition, development could occur on the private land in the affected environment that is proposed for acquisition. While these actions will be reversible, the probable outcome is that these lands will never be available for public use, but rather will be developed for private gain.

VII. MITIGATION AND MONITORING

A. Mitigation

The proposed action includes numerous management actions which are designed to mitigate all impacts to acceptable levels. Full development of the El Mirage Cooperative Management Area will have an overall net positive impact on the affected environment. Therefore, there are no additional mitigating measures required.

B. Monitoring

A comprehensive monitoring plan has been developed for the affected environment and is located in the monitoring section of the Management Plan, section III-G.

VIII LIST OF PREPARERS

A complete list of the persons, clubs, and agencies that assisted with the preparation of this environmental assessment may be found in Section V of the Management Plan, List of Preparers.

IX CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

A complete list of the persons, clubs, and agencies that contributed to, or that were involved through consultation and coordination with the assimilation of this document may be found in Section V of the Management Plan, Parties Consulated.

8340 (El Mirage)
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X FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

The environmental impacts of the proposed action have been addressed. On the basis of this environmental assessment, it has been determined that, after mitigation, there will be no significant impacts resulting from the implementation of the proposed action. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 is not required.

Recommended by :

Sharon Pais — 1-19-90

Environmental Coordinator,
Barstow Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management

Date

Approved by:

Alden Sievers — 1/19/90

Area Manager,
Barstow Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management

Date

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